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THE
HISTORY
OF THE
INSTITUTION OF THE SABBATH DAY,
ITS USES AND ABUSES;
WITH
NOTICES OF THE PURITANS, THE QUAKERS,
THE
NATIONAL AND OTHER SABBATH CONVENTIONS,
AND OF
THE UNION BETWEEN CHURCH AND STATE.

BY WILLIAM LOGAN FISHER.

PHILADELPHIA:

JOHN PENINGTON, 169 CHESTNUT STREET.

1845.

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J. G. Abbott.

2. Sunday, December 20, 1855

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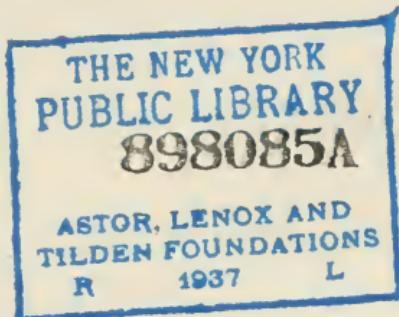
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TO THE FRIENDS OF TRUTH.

I DEDICATE to you the following pages. It is believed there has never been a time since the period of Charles I., in which sectarianism has been so rife as it is at this moment. Children of tender years, and of indiscretion, are inveigled by ignorant men, under the pretence that they are peculiarly the vicegerents of Heaven, to adopt forms and ceremonies of religion which belong rather to Paganism than to Christianity. Women, forgetting that religion consists in purity of heart, and the unostentatious performance of every duty, are neglecting their families, to seek excitements which arise from superstition. Men are led to madhouses under delusions as wild as any we read of in history. Governors of states are solicited to appoint days for public thanksgiving and prayer, where such have not been customary. Petitions are presented to our legislatures to increase penal statutes

relative to the observance of the first day of the week, and a sectarian effort, to accomplish these and similar movements, is perceptible throughout the country.

The attempt to make one day more holy than another, is alike contrary to the spirit and to the letter of the New Testament, and is adverse to those pure principles of religion which call for a daily practice of virtue, and on which the welfare of society must ultimately depend.

In the reign of Charles I., one of the great levers of action was an excitement upon this subject. Liberty of conscience was denied, and it was carried so far, that it was deemed unlawful to walk in the streets or in the fields to take fresh air on Sunday.

It may be said that we shall be saved from similar excesses by the general enlightenment of the age; but of what avail is this, if public opinion, upon which this hope is founded, is debased. Notwithstanding any supposed improvement, we must expect from every age fruit according to its nature, and that nature is determined in part by the thou-

sand acts by which bigotry operates upon ignorance.

We cannot forget that we have recently seen fires kindled by the torch of the sectarian, and public opinion for a time too powerful, *in defence of the act*, for the hand of civil government.

The following work has been prepared amid many engagements. My object has been to expose errors which are deeply rooted and of long continuance.

“There is nothing true but truth.”

To that I appeal to sustain the views which I have advanced.

In the repetition of words, I have sometimes used the terms Sabbath, Religion, etc. in their popular signification, but I have endeavoured, as occasion presented, to exhibit what I conceive to be their true meaning.

W. L. F.

Wakefield, Philadelphia County, 1845

HISTORY OF THE INSTITUTION OF THE SABBATH DAY.

THERE having lately come under my observation the “Proceedings of the State Sabbath Convention, held at Harrisburg,” and “Permanent Sabbath Documents,” printed in Boston, together with several other works upon the subject of the Sabbath, so at variance with the view of it which I have considered correct, that I am induced to endeavour to give a short outline of the institution, for the information of those who may not have had leisure to examine for themselves. In the course of the exposition I expect to be able to show—

First. That keeping *one day* more holy than another, is alike contrary to the *spirit* and to the *letter* of the New Testament, and at variance with the practice of the early Christians.

Second. That the *ten commandments* and all the *Jewish code* have been abrogated.

Third. That those sects which have been most distinguished for the observance of the Sabbath day, were the most ceremonial in their systems of religious injunctions.

Fourth. That the statements made by Sabbath conventions are not to be relied upon.

Fifth. That any legislation upon the subject is a re-union of church and state.

We live in a country of sectarian prejudices, and they are not the less manifested, because various sects may unite to accomplish a particular object. The attempt to make all men conform to one view concerning the Sabbath, is partial in its nature, has originated in sectarian intolerance, and in ignorance of the nature of truth.

To the observance of the first day of the week as a day of rest and relaxation, few persons will be found to object; but if there are others who choose to employ it in a different manner, to work or to travel as it suits them, it is perfectly consistent with the Christian religion that they should do so. The Sabbath is not a Christian but a Jewish institution. It never had any application to any other than the Jewish nation. In common with other Jewish laws, it was binding upon the Jews and upon them alone.

The whole tenor of Christ's mission seems to

have been to lead men to practical truth; and it is not too much to say, that all the efforts of sectarians to enforce the observance of what they call the Christian Sabbath or the Lord's day, as a day of peculiar holiness, are anti-christian in their nature and immoral in their tendency.

What is true in mechanics is true in morals. If we load a machine with unnecessary wheels and weights, its progress is retarded—it does not do the work that it ought to do. So in morals and religion, the moment we give them unnecessary forms and ceremonies, we retard, in the same degree, the simplicity of their motions, and the perfection of their characters.

In the patriarchal age, embracing a period of upwards of 2000 years, in which we have the lives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their descendants, there is no record of the observance of a Sabbath day.

Irenius and Justin Martyr, men eminent for their piety, who lived in the first ages of the Christian era, have united in the opinion that no Sabbath was observed prior to the Mosaic institution.* The works of Justin Martyr are the earliest of which any considerable portion has reached our time, and they mark the commencement of what has been termed ecclesiastical history. He says, “the cere-

* See Bailey's Dictionary.

monial law was in truth given to the Jews on account of the hardness of their hearts; as a mark of God's displeasure at their apostasy, when they made the golden calf in Horeb. All its ordinances, its sacrifices, its Sabbath, the prohibition of certain kinds of food, were designed to counteract the inveterate tendency of the Jews to fall into idolatry. "If," says Justin, "we contend that the ceremonial law is of universal and perpetual obligation, we run the hazard of charging God with inconsistency, as if he had appointed different modes of justification at different times; since they who lived before Abraham were not circumcised, and they who lived before Moses neither observed the Sabbath nor offered sacrifices, although God bore testimony to them that they were righteous."*

It should be considered conclusive upon this subject, that in the orders given to erect a tabernacle or place of worship to the east of Eden—in those to Cain and Abel relative to sacrifice—to Noah to sacrifice on coming out of the Ark, and to abstain from eating blood, and when the institution of circumcision was described, not one word should have been said respecting the Sabbath.

* The works of Justin Martyr, in the original language, are before me, but I have made use of the translation of the Bishop of Lincoln, in his "Account of the Writings and Opinions of Justin." Page 22.

An attempt has been made to remove the objection which arises from this omission, by asserting that from the notoriety of the custom it was unnecessary, and from the circumstance that circumcision was not named from the settlement of the Israelites in Canaan, down to the circumcision of Jesus Christ. But this argument the whole of the 17th chapter of Genesis completely refutes. All the circumstances therein detailed evidently shew that it had not been commonly used before that time. If the observance of the Sabbath had been a common thing, like circumcision, it would have been named without further notice, as circumcision is named when Jesus is circumcised. The difference in the treatment of the two cases is manifest.

Beausobrè, an eminent French protestant, in his introduction to the New Testament, expressly admits and gives his reasons for his opinion, that the Sabbath was not instituted until the time of Moses.*

It was 215 years from the time Jacob and his retinue settled in Goshen in Egypt until the period when the Israelites finally left that country. During all this time there is no mention of the Sabbath day. It is first spoken of in the wilderness, on their journey to the land of Canaan, when they had manna given to them for food. On the sixth day

* Horæ Sabbaticæ.

they found twice the quantity as on any other day. The account speaks of it as so extraordinary a circumstance, that all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. They seemed to be altogether at a loss to know why it should be thus; they had then been on their journey more than forty days, and it is believed that this astonishment would not have been manifested if they had been familiar with the institution. Afterwards, at Mount Sinai, it was more expressly spoken of; but all the evidence goes to shew, that it was never known as an institution before this period.

The prophet Nehemiah says, “Thou camest down also upon Mount Sinai, * * * * and madest known unto them thy holy Sabbath, and commandest them precepts, statutes and laws by the hand of Moses thy servant.” Chap. ix. 13, 14.

The bishop of Lincoln, in speaking of Selden’s work, “De Jure Naturali,” says, that he has collected all that can be found on the interesting subject of the institution of the Sabbath. His investigations shew the most extensive research. The work is old and of rare occurrence, and appears to have been written without sectarian bias of any kind.

He takes the same view of the subject, and says the institution was first given to the Jews at Marah in the wilderness, after leaving Egypt. That it

was a sign between God and the Jews, and that the Jewish writers maintain that it is not binding upon the Gentiles.* Paley, who has examined the subject with considerable care, advocates the same views.†

A mistranslation is said to have taken place in the 23d verse of the 16th chapter of Exodus, where it says, “to-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath.” This might seem to imply, from using the word “*the*,” that the institution had been known before, whereas the indefinite article ought to have been used; the text would then read “to-morrow is a rest of a holy Sabbath;” and this would not imply, as the other does, that the institution had ever been in use prior to this period. It is said that no Hebrew scholar will for a moment doubt the correctness of what is here said, concerning the use of the definite article, as that is not one of the points upon which there has been any dispute. The same observation is said to apply to Exodus xx. 10, where, instead of saying “the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the Lord thy God,” it would be a correct translation to say, “the seventh day *shall be* a Sabbath of the Lord thy God.”

* See “De Jure Naturali,” edition 1665, 13th and following chapters.

† See Paley’s Moral Philosophy.

These small criticisms are only material, as tending to prove the incorrectness of those who seem willing to believe, not only that the Sabbath was used in the patriarchal age, but also by the Jews during their sojourn in Egypt.

I am not aware that any thing which may be deemed authentic, can be found to confirm this opinion. It was at Mount Sinai in the wilderness that keeping a Sabbath was first made a law to the Jews, and it was repeated at different times, “Six days may work be done, but in the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy unto the Lord: whosoever doeth any work in the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. “Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant.”

“It is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.”*

Again: “Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; but in the seventh year shall be a Sabbath of rest unto the land, a Sabbath for the Lord: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard. That which groweth of its own

* Exodus xxxi. 15, 16, 17.

accord of thy harvest thou shalt not reap, neither gather the grapes of thy vine undressed: for it is a year of rest unto the land.”*

After seven Sabbath years there was still to be another year of rest, called the year of jubilee, in which liberty and restitution were to be proclaimed.

This has always seemed to me the most beautiful part of the Jewish policy. No matter how unwise or unfortunate (as the term is) families or individuals may have been, the jubilee year restored to them their possessions.

If Christians are bound to observe the Jewish Sabbath, they are bound also to observe the Sabbatical year and the year of jubilee.

Many of the laws of the Jews appear enlightened, some of them trifling, and others we are unable to understand. Among them we find the following: “Thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts, as of woollen and linen together.” “Thou shalt make thee fringes upon the four quarters of thy vesture wherewith thou coverest thyself.”† And others of the same character.

These laws were no doubt applicable to the Jews, but while we know so little of their policy we are unable to understand them.

* Lev. xxv. 3, 4, 5.

† Deuteronomy xxii. 11, 12.

The particular kind of cultivation that obtains in parts of several states in this Union, requires that the land should have rest every third year. They neither sow nor reap, nor gather its produce. It is as complete a Sabbath of rest to the soil as ever was observed in the land of Judah, and probably from the same cause: and the reason for the establishment of a Sabbath day among the Jews, would perhaps be found in the necessity of rest on their journey, in their diet, or mode of employment. They fed upon food less savory than that of the present day; acrimonious fruits and vegetables have been succeeded by those of a bland and nutritious character. Man can no more be worked beyond the nutriment that he receives, and the powers of nature, than a horse or an inanimate machine.

The operations of nature go on unceasingly—the sun rises, and the rain descends, and the trees put forth their buds and their fruits; the birds and the beasts, impelled by that power which we call instinct, are found performing their labour every day in the year, and man is as able to do the same as the inferior creation.

In all those employments where the exercise is moderate, man may work every day from year to year, without the slightest injury. Where the work is severe, he requires rest and recreation just in proportion thereto.

Thus in many kinds of business eight hours is as much as any man can work in the twenty-four; in particular branches he is relieved regularly at that period—in others, in proportion to the work he performs.

If we knew more of the history of the Jews, we should probably find some motive for the institution of the Sabbath which does not now appear. There are two reasons given in the Bible. First: It was to be an everlasting sign and covenant between God and the children of Abraham, that they might know that He was the Lord that did sanctify them.* But in Deuteronomy a different cause is assigned; it is there spoken of as a remembrance that “thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm.”† This clearly implies that it was not observed while the Jews were in Egypt, because while they were yet there they had not been brought out. Appian, one of the most eminent writers in the first century of the Roman empire, mentions that the Jews found such dreadful ulcers in their lower extremities, that they were obliged to stop and rest themselves, and from thence came the institution of the Sabbath.

* Exodus xxxi. 13.

† Deut. v. 15.

Josephus, in his work against Appian, denies this statement; but apart from all authority, nothing could be more probable than that after travelling in a warm climate, they should find sores on their feet, and that a day of rest should be absolutely necessary to them.

The truth of this cannot now be ascertained; but if the latter text is true, it is in itself a proof that the Sabbath has no relation to us. Neither we nor our forefathers were servants in the land of Egypt; we are of the Gentile stock; and as to its being a sign and covenant, as is spoken of in Exodus, so also is circumcision; that was to be an everlasting sign and covenant between God and the children of Abraham. They both stand upon the same footing, and there is as much authority for the continuance of the one as of the other.

In Exodus xxxi. 13, 14, also in other places, the Sabbath is as expressly confined to the children of Israel as words can make it: “*Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my Sabbaths ye shall keep; for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you.*” “*It is holy unto you.*” “*It is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever.*” The same ideas are expressed in Exodus xxxv. 2, 3, Leviticus xxiii. 3, and xv. 25. In consideration of these passages,

it is not easy to understand how any unbiassed mind, can, for a moment, believe that an institution so expressly commanded for the Israelites, should be intended to apply to the whole world; or how Nehemiah, in the text already referred to, could have spoken of the Sabbath as first made known to them when Moses came down from Mount Sinai, if it had been known before, or had been designed for any other people.

The prophet Ezekiel says, "Wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness; and I gave them my statutes and shewed them my judgments, which if a man do he shall even live in them. Moreover, I gave them my Sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them."*

The Bible refers, in many instances, to the vices of the Gentiles; but among these it is never once intimated that they had neglected the observance of the Sabbath day. The reason seems obvious, the law in regard to the Sabbath had no application to them.

People who are not acquainted with biblical criticism, would be astonished to see the abundant instances of interpolation and mutilation, which

* Ezekiel xx. 10, 11, 12.

have been discovered by pious men, searching after the truth in the Scriptures.

Some books referred to in the text are altogether wanting. In others, whole chapters and verses are missing; other parts are directly in opposition to each other; others again are mixed up with heathen mythology of various kinds. I believe there can be no doubt of the truth of this in any candid enquiring mind.*

It is not surprising that it should be so, considering the interest that sectarians have had in perverting texts to sustain their own dogmas; but it should lead to great caution in founding particular theories upon insulated parts of the Scriptures. It has been for thousands of years maintained, without much contradiction, that this world was created but about six thousand years ago. A more attentive observation of the indications of nature, made only during the present generation, has led to the general belief, founded chiefly upon geological truths, that this is not correct, that the world may have existed myriads of years; and that some latitude of construction must be given in the accounts of days and times recorded in the Old Testament relative to the

* Among many other works I may refer to De Wette on the Old Testament, translated by Theo. Parker, which contains a vast amount of biblical erudition and research.

foundation of the world: and it may be presumed that the history of God having created the world in six days and resting on the seventh and being refreshed, is to be considered rather as figurative than as being entitled to a strict literal construction. I believe there is no doubt that the whole account was written by Moses several thousand years after it happened.

The Rabbins have enumerated more than thirty different acts as unlawful for the Jews on the Sabbath day. They were forbidden to sow or to reap, to kindle a fire or to extinguish it, to expose anything for sale, to write or to scratch out; and many other things too numerous to mention. A fresh wound was not to be bound up on the Sabbath day; if a Jew fell down in the dirt, he was not to rise up; if he was overtaken on a journey, no matter where, he was not to stir from the spot; if he fell into a pit, he was not to be removed.

The day was observed with different degrees of severity by the various sects of the Jewish nation, and at different eras. At the time of the Macca-bees, the nation would not defend itself from the attacks of its enemies on the Sabbath; and it sustained so much injury thereby that Josephus relates a change of policy in this respect.* One prominent

* Josephus, vol. II. chap. 12.

feature was everywhere apparent, an entire relaxation from labour; no cooking was permitted, but still it was a day of feasting, and not of fasting; of joy, and not of austerities.

The text says expressly, “Whosoever doeth any work on the Sabbath day, he shall be put to death.” Now the Jewish law is either binding on Christians or it is not. If it is, the penalty for disobedience is plain and direct, “he shall surely be put to death.”

It would be a new thing in jurisprudence for people to be allowed to take one part of the law, that suited their own convenience, and reject the rest; they must take the whole or none. Yet sectarians, who pretend to sustain the Sabbath day, say the law for its observance is binding, yet that the penalty does not attach to it. I leave it to them to reconcile such discrepancies.

But this is not all: after having rejected the penalty which awaited its violation, they attach to it another which is not to be found in the text—that is, everlasting misery. Retribution in a life to come, is not one of the penalties denounced for a violation of the laws of the Old Testament. The Jewish policy was altogether of a temporal and outward nature; the doctrine of a future state is not to be found in the Mosaic code.

Warburton, one of the most learned bishops of

England, has proved this truth, as he thinks, conclusively, in a large work of several volumes.*

Thus it will appear that these zealous sectarians are moulding the Scriptures relative to the institution, taking from it in one part and putting on in another, to suit their own unhallowed prejudices.

The Bible also says, "Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations on the Sabbath day." I ask these sectarians, who are unsparing in their denunciations of those who do not observe the Sabbath as a holy day according to their own opinions, whether they are quietly eating their meals, drinking their tea and coffee, made by fires kindled in direct opposition to the decree relative to the Sabbath day? I have been told by one of the most learned doctors of the Presbyterian church, that this is the case. Then they are as surely desecrating the Sabbath as those whom they condemn.

It was wise in the late "Sabbath Convention" at Harrisburg not to attempt precisely to define what a desecration of the Sabbath was. If they had touched this subject, probably no two persons would have been found to agree. They could unite in condemning the Sunday boatmen on the canals, the Sunday travellers; but if they had been asked strictly to define what a desecration of the Sabbath

* Divine Legation of Moses.

meant, one would have said one thing—another, another. The most “spirited debate” that occurred at that assembly, appears to have been, as to the term that should be used to distinguish the first day of the week—whether it should be called “Sabbath,” “the Christian Sabbath,” or “Lord’s day.” The reason of this dispute was, that there was no authority for calling the first day of the week by either one of those names.

The command to the Jews contained in the Decalogue to observe the Sabbath day, related entirely to the Jewish Sabbath, which was the seventh day of the week; and if it is binding, it is the seventh day that should be kept. To pretend that that command was fixed and unchangeable, and yet to alter it to please the fancy of men, is in itself ridiculous. But, considering that the precepts contained in what is called the Decalogue, are believed by many people to have an authority which does not belong to the other Mosaic laws, and to be of perpetual moral obligation, binding upon Christians, I may observe, that the ten commandments furnish within themselves conclusive evidence, that they do not belong to the Christian code.

The third commandment is in these words, “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.” The simple

meaning of this is, that thou shalt not profane thine oaths.

Among the Jews all the public testimonies were ratified by an oath. In a discourse concerning public oaths and the lawfulness of swearing, by Doctor Gauden, Bishop of Exeter, there is the following passage: "It is clear then some swearing is morally lawful, agreeable to the express law of God; even in the third commandment, in which we are not only forbidden to profane the name of God, but the affirmative also is included, as sanctifying his name by swearing, if in doing thus upon just occasion, private or public, we sin not against any moral law."* Whether the sentiment is true or false, it is evident that this commandment was expressly alluded to and condemned by Christ in his sermon on the Mount: "Ye have heard that it has been said by them of old time, thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: but I say unto you, swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool."† Persons who are curious upon the subject, may see that biblical writers refer to these two parts of the Scriptures as being connected together. If the declaration of Christ does

* Discourse Concerning Public Oaths, p. 27.

† Matthew v. 33, 34.

refer to it, and I think there can be no doubt of it, sectarians of the present day, in attempting to make the ten commandments a moral law of perpetual obligation, are violating one of the plainest and most positive precepts of Jesus Christ.

“Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land”—this is Judaism, but not Christianity. Christianity is pursuing virtue for virtue’s sake. There is hardly a Christian of any refinement of feeling, that would be willing to acknowledge that he honoured his father and mother that his days might be long in the land. Many generations ago, there appeared at Alexandria a woman with dishevelled hair, bearing a pitcher of water in one hand, and a torch in the other, making this exclamation: “I will burn up the heavens with this torch, and extinguish the fires of hell with this water, that man may love his God for himself alone.”*

Again: “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.”

Is this a moral law of perpetual obligation, binding upon Christians, and which we are continually violating by making to ourselves the likenesses of

* Percy Anecdotes.

every thing on the earth, and under the earth, that is worthy of observation?

And some sects make images and bow down to them, and think that therein they do God service.

The same outward nature of the Jewish laws is again exemplified in the declaration, "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generations of them that hate me."

The homely primer distich,

In Adam's fall
We sinned all,

has been repeated a thousand times in a thousand ways, by the most learned as well as the most ignorant; but whatever men may say to the contrary, all seem practically to reject the idea, that as respects the great ends of existence, children suffer for the sins of their forefathers, who lived perhaps hundreds of years before them. It may have a physical application, but it makes no part of the Christian code.

And is it Christianity to repeat the idea, "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God?" This language suited Moses, but it does not so well apply to us.

There are immutable truths contained in the ten commandments, but they belong to those universal principles that are found among mankind the world

over, and that existed before the Bible was written. Their spirit pervades the Old as well as the New Testament—they are intuitive in their nature—they are the foundation of all order, of all law, of all truth. Were it possible to do them away, moral society would come to an end. We believe in them, not because they may be written in the ten commandments, or in the New or the Old Testament, but because they carry their own evidence, bring conviction to every bosom; and it shows the degraded nature of sectarianism, that it should attempt to place among these universal moral truths, the local Mosaic law, to observe the Sabbath day; a law so partial and limited in its nature, that upon the details of its application, the Jews themselves, for whom it was instituted, could not agree. The laws of morality pervade the Alkoran of Mahomet and the pandects of Justinian. Shall we thence take these for our text books, and be bound thereby? Surely they are just as obligatory upon us as the law of Moses!

There are still other reasons given to sustain what is called the Christian Sabbath. It is said the resurrection took place on the first day of the week, and that the meetings of the disciples were held on that day; and it is argued thence, not only that it sanctifies the day, but that it constitutes the authority for the change from the Jewish to what

is called the Christian Sabbath. The texts upon this subject require attention, because they have been so singularly perverted by the Sabbatarians, to prove their own particular doctrines.

It is necessary for us to understand the Jewish computation of time, "the evening and the morning were the first day;" and the express law of Moses says, "from even until even shall you celebrate your Sabbaths." There are many different modes of computing time; we begin our day at 12 o'clock at night, nautical men at 12 o'clock at noon; some nations begin the day at sunrise, and the Jews at 6 o'clock in the afternoon. The first account of the meeting of Jesus with his disciples after the resurrection, is in John xx. 19: "Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you." If the account had simply stated, "on the first day at evening," without any other reference, the argument would have been complete that this meeting was on the first day; but it says that it was the same day as the resurrection, which appears to have taken place early in the morning of the first day of the week; the whole context shews that it was the evening after the morning of the first day of the week; and this, according to the Jewish

computation of time, was the commencement of the second day, and we have no right to adopt any other. Hence it conclusively follows, that this meeting took place on the second day of the week.

Purver's translation of the Bible, which is before me, John xx. 1, uses this language: "Afterwards, on the first day after the Sabbath, Mary Magdalen comes in the morning," &c.; and in verse 19th it says, "When it was therefore the evening of that day, on the first after the Sabbath, the doors being shut," &c. This still confirms the same point, that this meeting was not on the first day of the week.

The Puritans, upon their arrival in New England, decided, upon solemn debate, that the Mosaic law should prevail; and, of course, that the evening of the first day on which Jesus met the disciples, was not a part of the Christian Sabbath; and it is not generally observed as such in New England at the present period.

The second meeting of Jesus with his disciples is stated to have been eight days after this, which, according to the usual computation, was on the second day of the week; and hence it is not true, as is asserted, that Jesus met the disciples again on the first day. The text, John xx. 26, is explicit on this subject; and it thus clearly appears, that neither of the meetings of Jesus with his disciples after his resurrection, was on the first day of the week; and

the authority which sectarians wish to derive from this circumstance for the peculiar observance of the first day, and which is the result of a forced construction of Scripture, is altogether wanting. The learned Doctor Adam Clark, in his Commentaries, referring to the 26th verse, and quoting "after eight days," says, "It seems likely that this was precisely on that day se'nnight on which Christ had appeared to them before; and from this we may learn, that this was the weekly meeting of the apostles." Such perversions of plain, direct language, are met with on almost every page, wherein Sabbatarians undertake to shew the necessity of the observance of the first day of the week, as a day of religious exercises. The object is the maintenance of their own particular opinions; if they speak the truth, the Scripture does not support them. It is not alone in the writings of Doctor Clark that this perversion is to be found; Paley and others adopt the same view, pretending that eight days after the evening of the first day of the week, is again the first day.

There is another meeting of the disciples spoken of in Acts xx. 7, in this wise: "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached to them, (ready to depart on the morrow,) and continued to preach until midnight." This meeting, following still, as we are bound to do, the Mosaic computation

of time, took place on what is now called Saturday, after six o'clock in the evening; and, as the text says, he was "ready to depart in the morning," it proves his travelling on the first day of the week, and that the Apostle Paul did not keep the first day as Sabbatarians contend the Sabbath should be kept.

There is still another passage, (1st Corinthians xvi. 2,) on which Sabbatarians rely to make out their case: "Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store as God has prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." This text, which says that they are to "lay by in store as God has prospered them," has a distinct meaning, that they are to reckon up their accounts on the first day of the week for the week preceding, and is directly opposed to a sanctification of that day.

If these texts prove any thing, it is directly the reverse of what is attempted to be drawn from them. But there are two other points connected with the resurrection, which are worthy of all observation from men who claim to adhere to a strict literal construction of the Scriptures, and which show conclusively, that so far from particularly sanctifying the first day of the week, Jesus left, in his conduct, the most express testimony against it. We read in Luke xxiv. 13-15, that upon the first day of the week, two of his disciples went to a village called

Emmaus, "which was from Jerusalem about three score furlongs," * * * * that "while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near and went with them."

A Sabbath day's journey was seven furlongs and a half.* It thus appears that the journey was about eight times the distance of what was allowed by the Jewish laws, or nearly eight English miles. This distance is also sustained by Josephus,† and it was travelled directly from Jerusalem, where he had been accustomed to meet his disciples. Even Bethany, where it is said he led his disciples out, and lifted up his hands and blessed them, was fifteen furlongs, or two Sabbath days journeys from Jerusalem.‡

I am certainly aware that there is little chance that those whose opinions are already formed, will be willing candidly to examine the foregoing texts with a steady eye to truth; but I may ask reasonable men to judge for themselves, and the result I think will be, that there is no authority for the substitution of the first day of the week in place of the Jewish Sabbath; and I shall shew hereafter that there is no authority for the continuance of the

* Clark's Notes on the Scriptures, Acts i. 12.

† See War, book vii. section 6.

‡ Clark's Commentaries.

Jewish Sabbath. John, the Divine, speaks of being in the spirit on the Lord's day, and hence in the limited views that are taken of it, and to establish particular sectarian notions, it is pretended that the visions that he had at the Isle of Patmos, were on the first day of the week, and that this is a proof of the sanctification of the day. If that day were called in Scripture the Lord's day, there might be some reason in the application; but it is not called so in any part of the Bible. It is much more natural to suppose that it is so spoken of, as a particular period of illumination of mind, than as having relation to any particular day. The word *day* is used in many parts of the Scripture without application to any precise period—thus: “To-day, if ye will hear his voice,” &c.—“Abraham desired to see my day,” &c. The word *day* in these instances has no relation to any particular period of time; and it is not necessary to suppose, that all the visions of John the Divine, as recorded in the book of Revelations, were seen on the first day of the week; it is much more likely that they embraced many days, perhaps weeks and months.

The whole of the New Testament teems with evidence of the truth of the opinions that I have expressed. I could appeal to sectarians to establish this, but that they may be said not to believe in the Scriptures, and they would not be willing to submit

the subject to the candid observation of disinterested men. A belief in the Scriptures would be, in their plain obvious doctrine, in giving to each word and sentence the explanation which was consistent with the rules of grammar and common sense, without prevarication or deception of any kind, and without any reference to the truth or falsehood which might be supposed to be involved in it. Such a belief in the Scriptures would not suit sectarians, it would often prove too much or too little for them; it would at once put an end to Sabbath conventions. The views they promulgate cannot be sustained upon any other principle than a disbelief in the doctrines of the New Testament. Every respect is due to the opinions of men of truth and candour, however much they may be at variance with our own; but those of the Sabbatarians are entitled to the less respect, because they seem unwilling to listen to the truth upon the subject. They have often been refuted, but still they repeat their assertions, sustaining them by perversions of texts. Men of deep, abiding prejudices cannot believe the truth, however plainly it may be brought before them; and it seems a hopeless task to make any appeal to them. They reply not by argument, but by opinion and denunciation.

To others I may say, and I wish them to examine the subject carefully for themselves, that there

is not one verse or text contained in the whole canon of the New Testament, which recommends or inculcates the observance of the first day of the week, or any other day, as one of peculiar holiness, or as a day to be devoted to religious exercises. There is not one word said against Sabbath-breakers, nor a single text that gives the slightest idea that it was deemed unlawful by Christ, or his immediate followers, to do any work on the first day of the week, that was proper to be performed on any other day. There are some of the Jewish laws expressly revived by the apostle Paul;—that we shall abstain from blood, and from things strangled, &c. See Acts xxi. 25, and xv. 28. But among these, the laws relative to the Sabbath day are entirely omitted. It is singular enough that sectarians should pay no attention to this positive prohibition of the apostle; that they should eat blood and things strangled whenever it suits them to do so; that they should reject what has been revived by the apostle, and revive what has been expressly rejected by him. See 2nd Colossians 16, 17. “Let no man judge you in respect of the Sabbath day.” It proves what I have adverted to above, that sectarians do not believe in the Scriptures.

I shall quote some of the texts upon this subject; but I may here remark, that the total omission to inculcate the observance of any particular day, is in

itself proof against it. There are abundant instances in which the observance of the moral law was inculcated both by Christ and his apostles, but that one thing, upon which so much stress is now laid, is entirely omitted.

Upon all suitable occasions, Jesus opposed the superstitions of the Jews respecting the Sabbath day. In treating upon the subject we must steadily bear in mind the great importance attached to the Sabbath in the Jewish policy. There is one instance of a person who was stoned to death, because he was found gathering sticks on the Sabbath day.* There is a story of one Rabbi Solomon, who had fallen into a pit, and exclaimed,

Out of this slough I will not rise,
For Holy Sabbath day I prize.

I adduce these instances to show the extreme rigour of the Jewish law, and the practices under it, in relation to the observance of the Sabbath; and it is this law, with all its severity, for they cannot be separated, which it is now pretended constitutes part of the great moral law, binding upon the whole world. It is contended by the Sabbatarians, that Jesus “religiously observed the Sabbath day;”† they make wanton assertions, which they are unable

* Numbers xv.

† See proceedings of the Harrisburg Sabbath Convention.

to prove. He not only did not sanction the observance of the day, but his doctrine, his precepts, his example, show directly the reverse. Let the texts be carefully examined, that the truth may prevail.

He travelled, as I have before stated, on the first day of the week; thus giving, by his conduct, after his resurrection, direct evidence that he did not regard what is now called the Christian Sabbath. He also travelled on the Jewish Sabbath;* it might have been what was called a Sabbath day's journey, which was permitted to the Jews, though it does not appear so by the text.

I ask these sectarians how it is, that, with the New Testament in their hand, and taking that for their guide, they can condemn people for doing just what Jesus did?

He visited on the Sabbath. I have examined several translations relative to the account of this, recorded in Luke xiv. 1. The venerable Charles Thomson, secretary to the continental congress, told the author of these pages, that he had written every line in the Bible, from Genesis to Revelations, five different times with his own hands, in order to make his translation perfect. He takes a broader ground than any of the rest, and uses these words, "Observing how eager the guests were for

* Mark ii. 23.

the first places at table, he addressed them," &c. In verse 12, his translation says, "Then he said to him who had invited him," &c.: one translation says, "He went to eat bread;" another, "to eat victuals;" another, simply "to eat." The distinctions are not material, but the text altogether shews this, that Jesus was invited on the Sabbath day to the house of one of the chief Pharisees; that the company was so large that different rooms were opened, and that there was what would be called in this country *a rush* to get seats at the table. As there is not the slightest intimation, that the invitation of this company on the Sabbath day, was improper in any way, it is sufficient, in connection with other things of the same character, to shew how little dependence is to be placed upon the statements of these Sabbatharians.

I have before me one of their publications, which says, "Visiting and travelling are enormous profanations of this holy day." I have stated that Jesus visited, and that Jesus travelled; they cannot controvert it; and if their position is true, I leave it to them to make the application.

The Jewish law says, "Take heed to yourselves and bear no burden on the Sabbath day;*" yet in direct contradiction of this, the man who was healed

* Jeremiah xvii. 21, 22.

was directed by Jesus to take up his bed and walk on the Sabbath day; and it is stated that the Jews sought to kill him, because he had thus broken the Sabbath. There are other instances of the same character, all directly opposed to the doctrines of the Sabbatarians.

Besides these negative proofs, there are a variety of positive texts in the New Testament, which seem to forbid, not only the observance of the Jewish Sabbath, but which cover the whole ground, and object to the observance of any one day as a day of peculiar holiness. It would take many pages to recount them all; I quote some of the most material.

“But now after ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.”* Again: “Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days, which are a shadow of things to come.”†

As to the words, “The Sabbath was made for man,” which seems to be a very favourite quotation, for the want of anything better, if Sabbath-

* Galatians iv. 9-11.

† Col. ii. 16, 17.

rians would not garble the whole context, it would shew, that it was part of an absolute reproof to the Jews for their superstitious regard to the day.

I subjoin the whole of it, that there may be no mistake.

“And it came to pass, that he went through the cornfields on the Sabbath day; and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn. And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold why do they on the Sabbath day, that which is not lawful? And he said unto them, Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungered, he, and they that were with him? How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the show bread, which is not lawful to eat, but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him? And he said unto them, The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.”*

I add also the following from John, to which I have before alluded: when Jesus had directed the man whom he had cured to take up his bed and walk, the Jews said unto him, “It is the Sabbath day, it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed.” “And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the Sabbath day. But Jesus answered them: My

* Mark ii. 23-27.

father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his father, making himself equal with God.”*

Without any of these testimonies, it might be believed, *a priori*, from the nature of the doctrine promulgated by Christ and his apostles, that keeping one day more holy than the rest, was incompatible with the precepts they taught. Their views were of a much holier and more enlarged character. It was not to days, or times, or ceremonies, that they directed their followers, but to truth, which existed independent of them. And there is evidence, that no Jewish Sabbath, no Christian Sabbath, or Lord’s day, was observed with peculiar holiness by the early Christians.

After the lapse of so many centuries, and with very indistinct history of the early Christians, immediately succeeding the apostolic age, it is impossible to arrive at any exact conclusions. Enough, however, is known to determine one point, that no particular rule prevailed, as would have been the case had any one day been consecrated by them as a day of peculiar holiness.

There is one remarkable circumstance relative to their assemblies, they seem to a great extent to

* John v. 16-18.

have been held in the evenings, or before daylight. In the account of the first meeting of Jesus with his disciples, after his resurrection, it is mentioned that it was “at evening;” it is added, “the doors being shut for fear of the Jews.” So in the letter from Pliny, to which I shall advert, the meetings of the Christians are said to have been before daylight. Tertullian often mentions the nightly meetings of the Christians. There are other repeated notices of the same thing. Some of these meetings might have been the result of a fear of persecution; but the constant practice, in so many countries, together with the knowledge that the converts were persons almost entirely among the labouring classes of the community—men who contributed to their necessities by the labour of their own hands—leads to the conclusion, that, during the day-time, they were working at their usual employments. This is confirmed by Justin Martyr, when he reproaches the Jew for spending the Sabbath in idleness, and by the Jew who says, that the Christians keep no Sabbath, to which also I shall refer hereafter.

There is no doubt that the early Christians held religious meetings. The letter from Pliny to Trajan, contained in Book X. Letter 97, which has often been quoted, says, that “the Christians whom he had examined, declared that they made it a practice, on a stated day, to meet together before day-

light to sing hymns with responses to Christ as a God, and to bind themselves by a solemn institution not to do any wrong act.” This letter, which certainly bears the marks of authenticity, has been pronounced a forgery by Dr. Semler, of Leipzig, and other learned German critics. Admitting it to be true, it proves nothing; it does not speak of the first day of the week, and alludes only to the Christians in Bythinia.

The works of Justin Martyr are still more explicit, though written at a later period. He says, that “they met together on Sunday; that the memoirs of the apostles, and the writings of the prophets, are read as long as circumstances will admit;” and it is otherwise mentioned that the poor were provided for, and that there were regular feasts of charity—“sober repasts.” There is incontestable evidence, that worship was celebrated in a different manner in different countries; that the early Christians not only assembled on the first day of the week, but also on the fourth, sixth and seventh days.*

In some parts, especially in the eastern countries, Saturday was appointed for religious meetings, not, as it is stated, because they were infected with Judaism, but to worship the Lord Jesus Christ, as is expressly affirmed by Athanasius and others.†

* Mosheim, 1st vol. † See Cave's Primitive Christianity.

The proof that any particular sacredness was attached to any peculiar day, is altogether wanting. On the contrary, it will be shewn hereafter, that no distinction between days was made by the early Christians, until the church became corrupt.

Many of the ceremonies of the church, a considerable proportion of which have come down to us, had their origin in the superstitions of the Pagans and the Jews. Mosheim, speaking of the first century, says, that the Christian religion was peculiarly commendable on account of its beautiful and divine simplicity; and that many of the external rites were adopted, that they might captivate the senses of the vulgar, and refute the reproaches which had been cast upon the Christians, by the Pagan priests, on account of the simplicity of the worship; and because they had no temples, altars, victims, priests, "nor any thing of that external pomp, in which the vulgar are so prone to place the essence of religion."

The works of Justin Martyr are the first of an ecclesiastical character, on which implicit reliance is placed by all. Accomplished in the learning of his age, his life and his death were marked by sincerity in the cause of truth.

There is preserved in his works a dialogue between himself and Trypho, a learned Jew, in which the Jew objects to the Christians, that they did not

observe the Sabbath day. The Jew says to Justin, “The Christians, though they boasted of the truth of their religion, and wished to excel all other people, differed in nothing from the heathen in their manner of living, because they neither observed the festivals, nor the Sabbath, nor circumcision.” To which Justin replies, “There is another kind of circumcision, and you think highly of that of the flesh. The law will have you keep a perpetual Sabbath, and you, when you have spent one day in idleness, think you are religious, not knowing why it was commanded.

“As, therefore, circumcision began from Abraham, and Sabbath, and sacrifice, and oblation from Moses, which it has been shewn were ordained on account of your nation’s hardness of heart, so, according to the counsel of the fathers, they were to end in Jesus Christ the Son of God.”

“Do you not see,” he says to Trypho, “that the elements are never idle, nor keep a Sabbath? Continue as you were created, for if there was no need of circumcision before Abraham, nor of the observance of the Sabbath, and festivals, and oblations before Moses, neither now is there likewise after Christ.”*

Again: “If any among you is guilty of perjury,

* I have copied the above from a work called “Sunday Police.” The translation has been compared, and found correct.

or fraud, let him cease from these crimes; if he is an adulterer, let him repent, and he will have kept the kind of Sabbath pleasing to God."

In his dialogue, page 241, Paris edition, Justin says, "A greater mystery was annexed by God to the eighth than the seventh day. This mystery he afterwards states to be the command to circumcise on the eighth day, which was a type of the true circumcision from error and wickedness;** and for several other reasons which may therein be referred to. Justin Martyr was supposed to have written within fifty years of the death of some of the writers of the New Testament, and his evidence may be considered to be conclusive, that no one day was considered more holy than another by the early Christians.

I make the following extract from the Institutes of John Calvin, the indefatigable reformer, the great promulgator of the doctrine concerning predestination, and considered to be the founder of the Presbyterian church. To avoid cavil, I give the original Latin text, with a translation made for this work.

"Ceterum non dubium quin Domini Christi aduetu, quod ceremoniale h̄c erat, abolitum fuerit. Ipse enim veritas est, cuius presentia figuræ omnes

* See Bishop Lincoln's account of Justin's writings, page 96.

evanescunt: corpus cuius aspectu, umbræ relinquentur. Ipse, inquam, verum Sabbathi complementum. Per baptismum illi conseulti, in consortium mortis ejus insisti sumus, ut resurrectionis participes, in novitaté vitæ ambulemus. Ideò Sabbathum umbram fuisse rei future alibi scribit Apostolus: corpus extare in Christo, hoc est, solidam veritatis substantiam, quam illo loco bene explicavit. Ea non uno die cōtentia est, sed toto vitæ nostræ cursu, donec penitus nobismetipsis mortui, Dei vita impleamur. A Christianis ergo abesse debet superstitionis dierum observatio.”*

“But it cannot be doubted, that every thing ceremonial was abolished at the coming of Christ our Lord. For he is the reality, at whose presence all types vanish—the substance, at whose sight shadows are forsaken: he, I say, is the true fulfilment of the Sabbath. Being by baptism buried with him, we have been grafted into a share of his death, that, being partakers of the resurrection, we should walk in newness of life. Therefore, the apostle in another place says, that the Sabbath was the shadow of something future—that in Christ is the body; that is, the solid, real substance, which in that place he has well explained. This is content, not with one day, but with the whole course of our life, until,

* Calvin’s Institutes, book II. chapter 8, section 31.

being wholly dead to ourselves, we are filled with the life of God. Far, therefore, from Christians ought to be the superstitious observance of days."

Words could hardly be more explicit than those Calvin has made use of, he adverts to the propriety of holding public meetings on the first day of the week, and adds, "Oh! that it were granted to us that we might assemble every day, that so the distinction of days might be removed."

William Penn, on the same subject, speaks as follows: "As to consecrated days and times, and the superstitious observation of them, this we are displeased with, as beggarly and Jewish. * * He, certainly, little deserves to be styled an evangelical minister, who, instead of preaching the end of all holy days, feasts, new moons, solemn assemblies and Sabbath days, is asserting and maintaining the absolute necessity and service of them under the gospel. 'Let no man judge you in meat or drink, or in respect of an holy day, or new moon, or of the Sabbath, which are shadows of things to come, but the body is of Christ.' This doctrine Paul preached and writ; how then should it be evangelical to institute a second, visible Sabbath, in the room or place of the first, when the first was abrogated as shadowy, is absurd and incongruous; for the reason of the visible and external rest, was the visible and external creation; but because the second

creation is invisible, and spiritual by the invisible word of his power, viz: the regeneration and redemption of the soul of man, (begetting him anew to God,) therefore should the gospel Sabbath be also spiritual and invisible, to which these words refer, ‘Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’—‘We which have believed, do enter with rest.’—‘There remaineth a rest for the people of God.’”*

It is not too much to say, that William Penn was one of the most enlightened men that the world has yet seen. His admirable principles of civil and religious liberty, promulgated at a time when the moral atmosphere was darkened with bigotry and superstition, have been the admiration of the world. His views of morality and religion were of the highest order; yet he hesitates not to say, that neither the Jewish Sabbath, nor any other holy day in its place, is binding upon Christians.

Many of the older bishops of the Episcopal church fully sustain the same sentiments. Among them, Aylmer, bishop of London, who also speaks of the propriety of innocent recreations on the first day of the week; repeating the text, to sustain his views, which sectarians now use for directly the opposite purpose, that “the Sabbath was made for man.”†

* Penn’s Works, folio, 2nd vol.

† See his Biography, in Bayle’s Dictionary, note HH.

Warburton, bishop of Gloucester, in his “Divine Legation of Moses,” says, there is the same authority for circumcision derived from the Mosaic law, as there is for the continuance for the Sabbath.*

I also refer to Doctor Peter Heylyn, chaplain to the kings of England,† and to Bishop Ironsides.‡

For the modern views of Episcopalians, I may cite the following:

Wm. Paley§ says, “A cessation upon the first day of the week from labour, beyond the time of attendance upon public worship, is not intimated in any passage of the New Testament, nor did Christ nor his apostles deliver, that we know of, any command to their disciples, for a discontinuance upon that day of the common offices of their profession.”

R. Wheatly, D.D.,|| principal of St. Alban’s Hall, and fellow of Oriel College, Oxford, says, “That the Lord’s day is to be held purely as a religious festival, Judaism being abolished, all its positive and ritual observances, must, of course, be wholly at an end. So that we are now no more compelled to keep the fourth commandment, than we are to

* Divine Legation, vol. IV. p. 31, note.

† Heylyn’s History of the Presbyterians.

‡ Penn’s Works, 480.

§ Chap. VII. Sabbatical Institutions.

|| Essays on Writings of St. Paul.

continue the worship of the temple or the daily sacrifice.”

Bishop White, in his Lectures on the Catechism, says, that it appears evident, so far as regarded the authority of the injunction to the Israelites, and unless some new obligation can be shown, the institution ceased, even in relation to Jewish converts to Christianity at the destruction of their religious polity, and that it was never extended to the Gentile Christians; of this there shall be given but one proof, it being decisive to the point. It is in the 2nd chapter of the Colossians, “Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days.” And he adds, that any employment conducive to the civic weal, which cannot be suspended without defeating the object, such as gathering in the harvest, and the like, may be allowed on the first day of the week.

Paley, in particular, and no doubt all the rest of these authors, speaks highly of the benefit of religious services on the first day of the week, grounding his opinions on the practices of the early Christians. This may all be well, but their practice, how estimable soever it may have been, is no obligation to us, and is not binding upon us.

I make the following extract from a sermon of

William H. Furness, delivered at the Unitarian church, in Philadelphia, on Sunday, March 17, 1844.

“There is no religious form of so general acceptance among Christians, as this which we are now observing, the use of this, the first day of the week, as an occasion of social worship. But Jesus Christ uttered not a word enjoining this observance. He nowhere teaches that a day is to be set apart for religious services. His countrymen were accustomed to regard the seventh day as a holy day. But he never insisted upon its being kept; on the contrary, whenever he referred to the Jewish Sabbath, it was to condemn the superstitious reverence with which that day was regarded. He was wont to do things on that day, which were considered as violations of its sacredness by the strict observers of the Sabbath, and which I imagine would be so considered by many now-a-days, if they were done upon the Christian day of rest. Once in the open air, in a public place, on the Sabbath, he cured a woman who had been suffering for years, (and whose case, of course, did not demand immediate attention,) and a great crowd was collected, and a great sensation produced. The usual order and quietness of the day must undoubtedly have been disturbed; for one of the strictly religious expressed his disapprobation of the conduct of Jesus, saying, that there were six days in the week, when the people

might come and be cured, and not on the Sabbath. With what indignation did Jesus treat this suggestion, pronouncing it gross hypocrisy to regard the day as too sacred for an act of simple humanity, for the exercise of that love which is the fulfilling of the law. There really does not appear to have been any one particular thing which stirred the spirit of Jesus more deeply, than the false and superstitious idea which his countrymen entertained of the Sabbath. He instituted no form of worship. He appointed no particular days or seasons."

The following extract is from a small work, entitled "The Sabbath," by Henry Grew, a clergyman of Philadelphia. "The duty of assembling on this day for social and public worship, necessarily involves the duty of separating ourselves from our secular concerns, so far as such worship requires. The common opinion that *it is sinful* to attend to such concerns on *any part* of the first day of the week, is sustained by no precept or example in the New Testament. I write now *of positive law*. What spiritual worshippers consider to be their privilege, is another question. The common opinion rests on the false principle of the holiness of particular days or times. There is yet a veil on the minds of some Christians in reading both the Old and New Testament, so that they cannot 'look to the end of that which is *abolished*.'" 2 Cor. iii. 13.

I have thus given the sentiments of men of different countries, of different ages, and of doctrines, in many respects, diametrically opposed to each other, whose opinions on the Sabbath are all coincident with the doctrines of the New Testament, and utterly at variance with that small portion of the Christian world, who are now attempting to cast odium upon those who cannot so far violate their consciences, as to believe that one day is more holy than the others. The practices among Christians have corresponded thereto.

The Palatine churches in Germany adhered tenaciously to the Calvinistic doctrine, and they may be considered to have formed the head and front of the Presbyterian church in the 16th century; yet it was only on the morning of the first day of the week that public meetings were held. In the afternoon, the gentlemen took to hawking and hunting, if the day was fit for either; visiting their friends, or whatever else was pleasing to them. The husbandman spent the greater part of the afternoon in looking over his grounds, ordering his cattle, and following such recreations as were most agreeable to his nature and education;* and it remains so, to a great extent, in the Protestant churches in Germany to the present day. At Ge-

* Heylyn's History of the Presbyterians.

neva, on Sunday morning, the gates are closed, the meeting-houses are opened, and people are expected to attend them. The after part of the day is a period of rest, and of innocent amusement. Such is, and has been, the general practice throughout the Christian world; we shall see in the sequel, by what means Christianity, upon this subject, has been partially lost sight of, and the Presbyterians, disregarding the sentiments of their great founder, have become more rigid than any other society.

The first decree for the observance of the first day of the week, called Sunday, was the result of that corrupt union between church and state, which has so often been productive of the most injurious effects to the cause of vital religion.

It was promulgated by Constantine the Great. I extract it entire, as it is extant in the *Corpus Juris Civilis*, under the head of *De Feriis*. Lib. III. Tit. 12.

In the Life of Constantine, by Eusebius, it is called “The Salutary Day;” and, as a matter of course, Eusebius, who was bishop of Cæsarea in Palestine, gives the emperor great praise for the enactment of the law. It is as follows:

3. Imp. Constant.

*Omnes judices, urbanæque plebes, et cunctarum
artium officia venerabili die solis quiescant. Ruri
tamen positi agrorum culturæ libere licenterque*

inserviant: quoniam frequenter evenit, ut non aptius alio dio frumenta sulcis, aut vineæ scrobibus mandentur, ne occasione momenti pereat commoditas cœlesti provisione concessa. Dat. Nonis Mart. Crispo 2, & Constantino 2. Coss. 321.

It will be observed, that this law only speaks of Sunday as a day of rest, and that it applies only to judges, town-people, and tradesmen. I subjoin the following literal translation.

“Let all the judges and town-people, and the occupations of all trades, rest on the venerable day of the sun; but let those who are situated in the country, freely and at full liberty, attend to the business of agriculture; because it often happens that no other day is so fit for sowing corn and planting vines, lest the critical moment being let slip, men should lose the commodities granted by the providence of Heaven.”

The character of Constantine is well known. He was the second Roman emperor* that embraced the Christian faith; he presided at the council of Nice, that council of bishops which undertook to decide which part of the New Testament should be considered canonical, and which rejected. He was, in

* Constantine is frequently spoken of as being the first Christian Emperor. Philip, who was crowned in the year 246, was the first. (Eusebius, edition 1607, page 3; also, Chronology in the same work.)

some respects, a great man; but his domestic life is marked by such atrocities, as would seem to render him unfit to be a judge in any matter pertaining to religion. "The voices of sycophants have sung his praises, because he embraced the Christian religion. Yet this man, in the very year that he presided at the council of Nice, murdered the husbands of his sisters Constantia and Anastasia. He murdered his sister's son, a boy only twelve years of age, under the most frivolous pretext. In the year that he issued his decree for the observance of the Sunday, he murdered his familiar friend, Sopater; and the year before, destroyed his wife, Fausta, by putting her in a bath of boiling water. These, though not all the atrocities he perpetrated in his own immediate family, are sufficient to show the character of the man; and sectarians may have all the benefit they can derive from the knowledge that it was this man, stained with the blood of his own domestic circle, that issued the first decree in a Christian country, for making any distinction between Sunday and any other day in the week.

The usage relative to the first day of the week, may be divided into three periods, which were marked by three classes of men, who have been more or less intermixed from the earliest period of the Christian church, down to the present day. First: That of the early Christians, by whom the

day was called Sunday. All who embrace the letter and spirit of the New Testament, reject totally the idea of a distinction of days. They have the most indisputable evidence that the primitive Christians attended to their usual occupations every day in the week.

The second, may be considered the symbolical period.

The third, to which I shall hereafter advert, the puritanical period.

The second, which I am now to consider, was distinctly shewn by the edict of Constantine. As the church became ceremonial, symbols of religion and festivals were appointed. They commenced at an earlier era than the reign of Constantine; but it was then for the first time that the State became a party in them, and lent its power to make the Christian religion one of splendour and consequence in the world, so as to captivate the Pagans who had been used to the imposing forms of heathen worship.

Christmas had been appointed a festival to commemorate the nativity of Christ; Easter,* as an annual mark of his resurrection; Whitsunday, and others, of like character, for particular periods.

* I am aware that the term *Easter* occurs in the New Testament. It is considered an interpolation, and that it derives its name from the goddess Eostre, worshipped by the Saxons.

Among these, was the first day of the week; it was not a day of austerities. Fasting had been introduced as a penance; but this was so directly in opposition to a day of rejoicing, that a variety of church edicts were passed, prohibiting fasting on the first day of the week. But even in this thing, there appears to have been no particular sanctity attached to the day. I have said before, that meetings for worship were held on different days in different countries, and the same practice prevailed when a weekly festival was more distinctly established.

Ambrose, bishop of Milan, who lived but a few years after the edict of Constantine was issued, when he was consulted upon the subject of there being no uniformity of days, advised that people should be governed by the usages of countries where they were.* But whether the festival was held on Saturday or Sunday, fasting was positively prohibited. The Motanists, a sect who arose in the second century, were remarkable for the greatest severity in their lives and doctrines. They had many absurd tenets, among which were laws of great strictness for fasting, but they excepted the first day of the week out of their austerities.†

The first man that was executed in the Christian

* Cave's "Primitive Christianity," chap. vii. page 114.

† Eusebius, Mosheim and Howell's Ecclesiastical Histories.

era, by the secular power, for heresy, was Priscillianus. It was done at the instance of some of the bishops. One of the charges against him was, that he kept the Lord's day by fasting. A council of the church was assembled on the fourth of October, 381, in reference thereto, which expressly anathematized all such as fasted on that day, whether by mispersuasion or superstition.

In the epistle of Ignatius to the Phillipians, it is stated, that "he is a killer of Christ who fasts on the Lord's day, or on Saturday;";* and there is a variety of evidence to show that the Sunday was considered to be a day of relaxation, of joy, and rejoicing, rather than of gloom. The Pharasaical doctrine, which is now so prevalent, of keeping that day with strictness, was, among the Christians of this early period, counted to be a great wickedness. Eustathius renewed the practice of keeping it as a fast day, and it was again condemned by a provincial synod, held at Gangra, in Paphlagonia, which decreed, that "if any, upon pretence of abstinence, fasted on the Lord's day, he should be anathema."

One of the canons of the council of Nice decreed, that praying by kneeling should be especially interdicted on the day of the resurrection of our Lord

* Howell's Ecclesiastical History, folio, vol. IV.

Jesus Christ, because it indicated fear and sorrow, on a day in which the whole church exults and rejoices.*

In the fifth century, Mosheim says, “to enumerate the rites and institutions which were added in this century to the Christian worship, would require a volume of considerable size;” and again, in the next century, “the cause of true religion sunk apace, and the gloomy reign of superstition extended itself in proportion to the decay of genuine piety. This lamentable decay was supplied by a multitude of rites and ceremonies.”† Among these, the canon of the mass was for the first time established. Almost as a necessary consequence of this departure from the truth, an edict was passed by the council of Orleans, in the year 538, to enforce more strictly the observance of the first day of the week.‡ Country labour, which had been left open by the edict of Constantine, was interdicted. Still it was declared, that to hold it unlawful to travel with horses, cattle and carriages, to prepare food, or to do anything necessary to the cleanliness or decency of persons or houses, savoured more of Judaism than of Christianity; and the council of Laodocia

* 16th Canon of the Council of Nice.

† Mosheim’s Ecclesiastical History, vol. II. 6th and 7th centuries.

‡ Encyclopedia, article Sunday.

enjoined that men should abstain from work, if possible; but if any were found to Judaize, that is to say, to keep the day with great strictness, "they were to be censured as great transgressors."*

Whilst, in the corruptions of the church, they thus increased their laws relative to labour on that day, it is everywhere apparent that they rejected the idea of the Jewish strictness; and it is equally apparent, that the church had become extremely ceremonial. Thus, at the council of Gangra, before referred to, an edict was passed, that "if any should take upon him, out of the church, privately to preach at home, and making light of the church, shall do those things that belong only to the church, without the presence of the priests, and the leave and allowance of the bishop, let him be accursed."[†] These things are connected together, and they are equally the effect of a ceremonial religion. It would take volumes to recount them, and they are all alike separated from that beautiful simplicity inculcated by Jesus Christ, which was the daily and hourly practice of virtue.

There were other attempts to solemnize the day, which are not mentioned in ecclesiastical history; and, so far as they can be traced, they appear to have been most apparent, wherever people most de-

* Encyclopedia, article Sabbath.

† Cave's Primitive Christianity, chap. vii. page 110.

parted from the simplicity of the gospel. Thus it is mentioned of the Saxons, by Bacon in his Notes on Selden, that when they first settled in England, they began their Sunday on Saturday at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, and held it until Monday morning; during which time they refrained from their usual occupations of hunting, &c. Many of their laws are still preserved, shewing them to have been an extremely superstitious people, and Hume says they were worse than the ancient Britons.

I may remark that the Roman laws upon the subject of Sunday, are extant in the “Corpus Juris Civilis,” collected by Dyonisius Gothofredus. There is at least one distinct notice that the enactments were made at the instance of the clergy; and Warburton, himself a bishop, in his work upon Julian, referring to the severities that were exercised towards the popular clergy, at the period succeeding Constantine, says, “It cannot be denied, that their turbulent and insolent manners deserved all the severities that were put upon them.” Sabbatarians may object to these laws, as having resulted from a church more or less corrupted; but they are left in this dilemma, to accept them or none. They have been the foundation of all our laws relative to the observance of Sunday—they have been revised and modified, and changed, according to the caprices of particular periods of time, but they rest upon no

other foundation than a ceremonial union between church and state.

The outline began by Constantine, and enforced by others more corrupt, if possible, than he, was left to be completed by the Puritans, a people who had their origin in the sixteenth century, and this marks the third period.

As a sect they are now extinct; but their name remains as a beacon-light against encouraging intolerance, bigotry and superstition, under the garb of religion. As the Puritans gained power in England, the whole nation became convulsed with the most frivolous disputes. It was not only the great leading doctrine, "That saving grace is not given, or communicated, to all men, and that those who are not predestinated to salvation, shall necessarily be damned,"* that distracted the country, but the government itself was thrown into violent convulsions respecting the use of the surplice, the rails placed about the altar, the ring in marriage, the cross in baptism, and other rites which Hume calls mean and contemptible. But they were not contemptible, if they involved *principle*.

By the Puritan book of discipline, the minister was not allowed to baptize children by the names of Richard, Robert, &c., which savoured of paganism;

* Nine articles of Lambeth in Hist. Presbyterians, p. 342.

they were to use Scripture names, such as Obadiah, Zephaniah, Hezekial, &c., which are so common among the descendants of the Puritans at the present day: and to the same source are we indebted for such names as Deliverance, Virtue, Fear, Hope, Charity, Thankful, Consolation, Praise God, The Lord is Near, and a variety of others of the same character.* The three first children that were baptized in Boston church, were named Joy, Recompence and Pity.†

It was Doctor Bound, one of the rigid Puritans, who applied the name Sabbath to the first day of the week, about the year 1595. He published a book upon the occasion, particularly decrying the Romish festivals, in which he stated that the church of Rome had joined many other days to the seventh day, making them equal, if not superior, as well in the solemnity of divine offices, as in restraint from labour; that the commandment for sanctifying every seventh day in the Mosaic Decalogue, is natural, moral and perpetual, and that the church had no authority to sanctify any other day.

This new Sabbath doctrine, as it was called, of Bound's, met with violent opposition from the Episcopal and other churches. Archbishop Whitgift condemned the book, and Rogers, another cler-

* Heylyn's History, pp. 254 & 339.

† Hutchinson's History.

gyman, said, “that it was the comfort of his soul, and would be to his dying day, that he had been the man and the means that the Sabbatarian errors were brought to the light and knowledge of the state.”* To counteract this doctrine, the book “concerning lawful sports, to be used on Sundays after divine service,”* which had been heretofore issued, was republished by king Charles I., with an order that it should be circulated through all the parish churches. This allowed of all kinds of diversions on Sunday; and the king declared, that it was done “out of pious care for the service of God, and for suppressing of those humours that oppose truth, and for the ease, comfort, and recreation of his majesty’s well deserving people.”* The bishops recommended these recreations, “as bringing the people more willingly to church, as tending to civilize them, and to compose differences among them, and as serving to increase love and unity.”* The Puritans were of a different mind, and violently opposed them; many of the clergy refused to read the king’s orders in their churches. The animosity was very severe, and was carried on for many years. The whole argument of the Sabbatarians, seemed to rest upon the Mosaic code. It serves to shew the error of trying to make the

* Neal’s Hist. Puritans, London edition, 1768, vol. I. p. 495; and vol. II. pp. 238-39.

consciences of men depend upon state laws. What is sanctioned in one age is condemned in another, from the particular caprices of those who may happen to be in power.

It is stated that every passage in the Bible, whether relating to the legal Sabbath, or to the spiritual Sabbath of the soul, was tortured to prove their position; and it was carried to such a length, that chief justice Popham commanded these books to be called in, and neither be printed nor made public for time to come.

This is believed to be the origin of the term Christian Sabbath, a name which has not generally been adopted among Christians, and it ought never to be adopted, because, applied to a day, it is a falsehood.

The Puritanical zeal upon the subject, appears to have had no other foundation than the attempt to gain power by destroying festivals, which were sustained by the Romish and Episcopal churches. Pretending to consider themselves peculiarly the church of Christ, their fanaticism was directed against every thing which they had not themselves created.

They carried their enmity against Christians and the churchmen so far, as to regard it profane and superstitious to eat mince-pies at the period of Christmas. They objected to the day as a festival,

to establish other festival days of their own; they declaimed against human learning, challenging the professors from Oxford to prove that their calling was from Christ, and set up theological schools to disseminate their own doctrines. They denounced, as we have seen, innocent diversions on Sunday, to appoint by act of parliament, when they had the power, another day in its place; and their whole history seems to lead to but one conclusion, that if they could best have gained their point by abolishing the Sabbath, instead of enforcing it, they would have done so. They rejected the doctrines of the early Christians, and the opinions of Calvin, without considering that a day made holy by them, had no more authority than a holy day created by the church of Rome.

Their doctrine gave great offence to the younger part of the community, who had been used to consider Sunday as a day of rest and of innocent amusements; and to satisfy them, the second Tuesday in every month was appointed in its place by act of parliament.*

In the excited state of the public mind, and in the bigotry that existed towards the Catholic church, this scheme had a wonderful influence with the people. Many ways had been tried for several

* Hume's History of England, vol. VII. page 33.

years to suppress these festivals, but they were all in vain, till this new Sabbath doctrine was brought up.

The contagion spread, to a certain extent, in all those countries where there was an opposition to the Romish see. Frederic the 5th, Prince Elector of Palatine, in an early period of the 17th century, under the influence of the English clergy, for the first time, ordered what was termed religious service, to be held in the afternoon of the first day of the week, in the Calvinistic churches of Germany. The same influence prevailed in the low countries, where, by the constitution, divine offices had been absolutely prohibited on the afternoon of that day.*

All the amusements and labour, common in other parts of Europe, had been allowed in England. By act of parliament, festival days included Sundays; and a law was passed, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, in these words: “All pastors, vicars and curates shall teach and declare unto the people, that they may, with a safe and quiet conscience, after their common prayer, in time of harvest, labour upon the holy and festival days, and save that thing which God hath sent; and if, for any scrupulosity or grudge of conscience, they abstain from working on that day, that then they shall grievously offend and displease God.”†

* Heylyn's History of the Presbyterians.

† *Horæ Sabbaticæ*.

Books were issued by the royal authority at a later period, licensing particular sports and amusements on the Sunday. As the Puritans gained power, without any consultation with the king, the house of commons directed that these books should be burnt by the hangman, which was done.*

The Puritans ordained, that not only labour and amusements should be interdicted, but that all travelling should be stopped; may-poles, which appeared like heathenish vanities, should be removed; no barber should be allowed to shave a man on Sunday; no tailor to carry home a suit of clothes; no one was allowed to sit at his own door, to walk the streets, or to enjoy the fresh air in the open fields. It was said to be preached from the pulpits, that to do any servile work or business on the Lord's day, was as great a sin as to kill a man; that to make a feast, or to dress a wedding-dinner, was as unlawful as for a father to take a knife and cut his child's throat.†

Laws of this nature, more or less severe, are everywhere intermixed with the Puritanic discipline; they were, in the true sense of the word, a Sabbath-keeping people; it formed one of the most prominent traits of their character; and if there is a page of history that can exemplify the

* Hume's History of England.

† History of the Presbyterians.

peculiar effect of a Sabbath-day religion, it is to be found in the recorded account of the Puritan sect.

It is to the accidental circumstance of the violent opposition of this people to the festivals and rites of the Romish and Episcopal churches, and not to any sound religious principles, that we are at this time indebted for Sabbath conventions, and all the extraordinary zeal that is exhibited in Judaizing the first day of the week; and it appears to have been fostered and encouraged from the most mercenary motives. What was innovation in one age, and well understood in England at the time, has become authority in the next; and the “Christian Sabbath” is now spoken of both by presumptuous men, who ought to know better, and by ignorant men, as having an authority which it never has had, and never can rightly obtain.

The Puritans, losing their influence in England, fled to this country, bringing with them their prejudices, which have descended from generation to generation to the present day. It may be asked, whence they derived their authority? The answer is, from Moses. The New Testament did not suit their purposes—making it a day simply of rest and rejoicing, savoured of the superstition of the Romish church. Mixing up fasting with Judaism, it became to them a day of austerities, one in which no labour was to be performed: and we shall see in the

sequel the deplorable effects that resulted therefrom. In the Boston Sabbath work referred to, speaking in the highest terms of the great advantages of keeping holy the Sabbath day, it says, "the manner in which people keep the Sabbath, will be a test of their character, an index of their morality and religion."* Here, then, we have in the Puritans, one of the fairest tests that the world can afford; and, in so interesting an inquiry, it is due to the cause of truth and justice, that I should bring their characters into view, as an index, according to the Boston writer, of what may be expected from a Sabbath-keeping people.

The observations of no one man, how extensive soever they may be, are sufficient to test the morality of different individuals, acting under different circumstances, through wide extended countries, but it may be received as an axiom, that in proportion as one day is made more holy than the rest, every other day is profaned.

It is an obvious truth, that so far as men confine their religion to one day, they become less religious on other days; and the inference is equally obvious, that, all other things being equal, a people who are peculiarly zealous in a religious observation of the first day of the week, will have a lower standard of

* Permanent Sabbath Documents, No. 1.

morals and religion, than other similar classes of society.

There may be supposed to be many instances to the contrary, but they will be found to be too partial in their character to sustain any general reasoning. Individual exceptions do not falsify general rules—the principle remains unchanged.

I use the term *religion* as conveying a general idea of my meaning; but the observance of days is in itself a proof of the want of pure and vital truth. Men may have excellent points in their character, but the whole basis of a distinction between days, is founded in irreligion; and this is fully exemplified in the Puritan character. As a class, they were not illiterate; there were among them, men of capacity, of courage, and of extensive enterprise; but their characters were ruined by what they called their religion.

Hume, in his History of England,* says, “Their whole discourse and language were polluted with mysterious jargon, and full of the lowest and most vulgar hypocrisy.”

Whether allowance is to be made or not for the opinion of a royalist author, it is certain, that their conduct seemed to threaten the destruction of the social fabric. They were called democratic in their

* Vol. VI. page 390.

principles, and they certainly resisted arbitrary power. They resisted it in order to gain it for themselves, and they gained it but to abuse it. They obtained an ascendancy in religion to open rivers of blood, and to establish ridiculous innovations.

If there ever was a dark benighted set of people, it was the Puritans. There have been many bigots, men of blood—superstitious people have existed in every age, zealots, men of intolerance, of mean and degraded sycophancy, of cant and hypocrisy; but it was reserved for the Puritans to combine in themselves, and that in an eminent degree, all the debasing qualities* of such men. These opinions are sustained by the most authentic history.

Heylyn, in his *History of the Presbyterians*,† says of them, “More goodly houses were plundered and burnt down to the ground, more churches sacrilegiously profaned and spoiled, more blood poured out like water, within four years space, than had been done in the long course of civil wars between York and Lancaster. With all which spoil and public ruin, they purchased nothing to themselves but shame and infamy, as may be shown by taking a brief view of their true condition before and after they put the state into these confusions.”‡

* Macauley, article Berthier.

† Heylyn, 469.

‡ It may be observed, that the different sects of the Presbyterians

Flying from persecution, they came to this country with feelings which were not softened by their sufferings. Their characters were unchanged, they were still men of blood. The most barbarous laws were enacted and enforced. Men were fined for not attending their churches, and whipped if unwilling to pay the fines; some were put in irons, others had their ears cropped, or their tongues bored with a hot iron. Even women of the most estimable lives and conversation, were publicly whipped by the hangman, and all for doing what the Puritans themselves had done in England, pleading for liberty of conscience, and objecting to the arbitrary powers of the established church.

There was not the smallest allegation that they had violated any moral law, or done any harm to any person whatever. These cases extended over many years, and they were purely cases of the most bigoted intolerance.

Their animosities were particularly directed against the Quakers. They affected to believe, as the Sabbatarians of the present day do, that one of rians, Puritans, Independents, Covenanters, and those afterwards called Congregationalists, were, to a certain extent, intermixed together; but it was the Puritans who made the greatest pretension to holiness, and it was principally that class which emigrated to this country. They were divided among themselves, but they appear to have been unanimous in their antipathy to the forms and doctrines of those who differed from themselves.

the first points in the life of a Christian, was a strict attention to what they termed the Christian Sabbath. The Quakers rejected this idea, and the general law of the province says of them, that "they frequented meetings of their own, in opposition to our church order"—that "they held horrid opinions"—that "they denied the established forms of worship"—and were "in opposition to the orthodox opinions of the godly."* This is the sum of all the charges which were made against the Quakers, and for which they were made to suffer so severely.

As a matter of curiosity, I subjoin two warrants, which will speak for themselves.

BOSTON, *September 16, 1668.*

"To the Marshall-General, or to his Deputy: You are to take with you the Executioner, and to repair to the House of Correction, and there see him cut off the right ears of John Copeland, Christopher Holder and John Rouse, Quakers, in execution of the sentence of the Court of Assistants, for the breach of the law entitled Quakers.

"EDWARD RAWSON, *Secretary.*"

"To the Constables of Dover, Hampton, Salisbury, Newbury, Rowley, Ipswich, Wenham, Lynn, Boston, Roxbury, Dedham; and until these vag-

* See "An Act made at a General Court, held at Boston the 20th of October, 1658.

bond Quakers are carried out of this jurisdiction, you and every of you are required, in the King's majesty's name, to take these vagabond Quakers, Anne Coleman, Mary Tomkins and Alice Ambrose, and make them fast to the cart tail, and, driving the cart through your several towns, to whip them upon their naked backs, not exceeding ten stripes apiece on each of them, in each town, and so to convey them, from constable to constable, till they are out of this jurisdiction, as you shall answer it at your peril, and this shall be your warrant. Per me,

“RICHARD WALDEN.

“*Dover, Dec. 22nd, 1662.*”

Thus through the fiery zeal of these Puritans, these tender women were to be whipped through eleven towns, a distance of 80 miles. The account says, that on a very cold day they were stripped naked, from the middle upwards, and tied to a cart, and whipped, while the priest looked on and laughed. The sentence was executed through several towns, carrying them through dirt and snow half leg deep, till a clerk of one of the courts had the independence to say, “I am here to see your wickedness and cruelty, that, if you kill these women, I may be able to testify against you.” The only opposition to their release seems to have been from John Wheelright, the priest, who advised the constable to

drive on as his safest way. Soon after which, another priest said to them, "Ye have spoken well, and prayed well—pray what is your rule?" They replied, "The spirit of God is our rule, and it ought to be thine, and all men's to walk by;" to which he replied, "it is not my rule, and I hope never will be."*

It would take many pages to recount all the dreadful atrocities that were perpetrated by the Puritans against those who differed from themselves.

The most severe laws were passed against all who were considered schismatics. Every free man was obliged to be a member of the church; and none but freemen were allowed to vote, or to hold public office. It was one of the most perfect unions of church and state that ever existed.

Roger Williams, a man of estimable character, fled from their persecutions, and began the settlement of Rhode Island. A woman of the name of Hutchinson, in Boston, who seems to have been a person of superior understanding, in her anxiety to get out of the reach of persecutions, fled within reach of the exasperated Indians; where she was murdered, with nearly all her family.† A great number of others moved out of their jurisdiction; toleration was preached against as a sin in rulers,

* Sewel's History, pages 324-25. † Hutchinson's History.

that would bring down the judgment of Heaven on the land. Mr. Dudley, one of their eminent men, died with a copy of verses in his pocket, written with his own hand; the two following lines, which made part of it, may be considered as the Puritan creed in New England:

“Let men of God, in court and churches watch
O'er such as do a toleration hatch.”*

Connected with these proceedings, were laws of even greater rigour than those in England, relative to the observance of the first day. Following the institutions of Moses, the first draught of the laws by Cotton, made profaning the Lord's day a capital offence. The punishment of death was erased by Winthrop; but they totally refused to make any alteration in that part which forbid persons from walking in the streets or fields on that day.*

As the command had been given to Joshua of old, to exterminate the heathen, so the Puritans, who conceived that they were now the true Israel of God, believed it their duty, not only to exterminate the Indians, who were heathen unto them, but to hang the Quakers. In England, calling religion to their aid, they held a prayer meeting of five hours continuance,† to ascertain, as they pretended,

* Hutchinson's History. † D'Israeli's History of Charles I.

whether they should cut off king Charles' head or not. The answer was according to their own prejudices, and the king was beheaded. They then thought it honourable to resist the arbitrary power of the king; but it was quite another affair when the Quakers objected to their own arbitrary proceedings, and asked for liberty of conscience for themselves.

They hung the king for objecting to liberty of conscience, and they hung the Quakers for pleading for it. There was no charge of immoral conduct against them, they were persons estimable in every way, but they had this unpardonable sin to answer for, that their faith differed from that of the Puritans; and for this alone they were hurried into the prisons, and several of them were publicly executed in Boston.

They were originally banished on pain of death. I copy these words from the warrant: "Because it appears by their own confession, words, and actions, that they are Quakers, wherefore, a sentence was pronounced against them to depart this jurisdiction on pain of death." Some of them returned to Boston; they were taken, brought into court, and, without ceremony, condemned to die.* One of these was Mary Dyer, a pious and exemplary woman,

* Sewel's History of the Quakers.

who came from Rhode Island. On going to the gallows, she used these words: "No eye can see, no ear can hear, no tongue can utter, and no heart can understand the sweet incomes or influence, and the refreshings of the spirit of the Lord, which now I feel."

After her two friends had been hung beside her, the halter put about her neck, and her face covered with a handkerchief, she was reprieved at the intercession of her son, and the next day wrote the following letter:

"28th of the 6th Mo. 1659.

"Once more to the General Court, assembled in Boston, speaks Mary Dyer, even as before: My life is not accepted, neither availeth me, in comparison of the lives and liberty of the truth, and servants of the living God, for which in the bowels of love and meekness, I sought you: yet, nevertheless, with wicked hands have you put two of them to death, which makes me to feel, that the mercies of the wicked is cruelty; I rather choose to die than to live as from you, as guilty of their innocent blood: Therefore, seeing my request is hindered, I leave you to the righteous Judge and Searcher of all hearts, who, with the pure measure of light he hath given to every man to profit withal, will, in due time, let you see whose servants

you are, and of whom you have taken council; which I desire you to search into.”*

The innocent character of these victims, is material to shew the unmixed nature of that bigotry which was the result of principles of intolerance, called religion, one of the prominent traits of which was a strict observance of the Sabbath-day. All the appeals that were made were of no use—Mary Dyar was hung.†

It was not alone against the schismatics in religion, that the zeal of the Puritans was directed. Children of tender age were believed to be possessed with devils, and nineteen persons were publicly executed in Massachusetts for witchcraft, protesting their innocence. Chief Justice Marshall, in his *Life of Washington*, says, “never was there given a more melancholy proof of the degree of depravity always to be counted upon, when the public passions countenance crime.”‡ Many other particulars of the same character I might recite

* *Sewel’s Hist.*, folio, p. 227.

† The son of Mary Dyar came to the State of Delaware, and her descendants are among the most respectable inhabitants of the United States. The children of Louis M’Lane, late secretary of the treasury, are her descendants in the seventh descending line. Also Judge Milligan of Delaware. Some of her personal trinkets still remain in the family.

‡ Note 5, to first vol. *Life of Washington*.

from the history of the Puritans to elucidate my opinion, were it needful to do so.

In order to a fair understanding of who are Sabbath-breakers, or to use the sectarian term, "desecrators of the Sabbath," it is necessary to advert to the works upon this subject. As has been stated before, they are not precise; but the plainest statement I can obtain is, that it is unlawful to travel on the first day of the week, except on the most urgent business; that boats on the canals, and cars on the rail-roads, should be stopped; that no mails should pass on that day; none go to the post-office, nor open their letters; that there should be an end put to all social visiting; that there is an evil in Monday markets, and Monday newspapers, because preparations must be made for them on the Sunday; that the Lord claims from man one day in the seven as his right; that the fourth commandment, relative to the Sabbath, is a law of perpetual obligation, binding upon Christians.

Much stress is laid upon attendance at what is called the sanctuary; and, it is added, that the main dependence for the consummation of their glorious work, is in the intelligent and devoted clergy of the state.

Their efforts thus appear to be peculiarly directed against Sabbath-breakers, in the strict sense of the word, against those who do not keep one day more

holy than the rest. There is not one sentence that has fallen under my observation, that shows any particular efforts against those who profane the other days of the week. Of course, as rational men, they would disapprove of moral offences, let them be committed when they might; but the particular scope of their efforts is against boatmen, those who navigate canals, travel, visit, and the like, on the Sabbath—men generally of good reputation; and against all who do not go to what are called places of worship; or who spend that particular day in idleness. Their doctrine, as I understand it, is simply this, that it is through the influence of keeping that day holy, that men are to be made better all the rest of their lives.

This, I believe, is an honest exposition of their views. Each of the things referred to, is mentioned in the proceedings of the Harrisburg Convention as violations of the Sabbath; and in Scotland, under the rule of the Presbyterians, a law was once passed against Monday markets. Many other violations would probably grow out of these. Thus we may understand what is the design of these Sabbatarians, what their doctrine is, and what particular class of people they allude to, in their term “desecrators of the Sabbath.”

They not only pretend to say, how much better persons are for strictly observing the day, but also

how much worse they are for not doing so. I am also able to shew the reverse side of the picture; not by bare assertions, but by authentic history.

There was another class of men that arose in England, about the same time as the Puritans; they came from the same walks in life; they spoke the same language, and were subject to the same persecutions. They were equally with the Puritans opposed to the doctrines of the Arminian church, and to the festivals and superstitions of the Romish see. There were also men among them of estate—men of capacity, of true hearts and undaunted courage. The conclusion would naturally be, that, under circumstances so similar, they must have been the same people. Nothing could be more unlike.

Their principles were almost the antipodes to each other. The Puritan faith was founded upon the idea that the Christian religion consisted in obedience to written precepts, and in the knowledge and belief concerning the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.* The Quakers rested upon the perception of right and wrong in individual minds. This led one to books, and the other to their own hearts; principles so different could but lead to different results.

The Puritans declared that “the form of govern-

* A work written by Robert Barclay, but a few days before his death, being a preface to a letter to a foreign ambassador.

ment ordained by the Apostles was aristocratical, according to the constitution of the Jewish Sanhedrim, and was designed as a pattern for the churches in after ages;" and that the standard of uniformity, and which was to be supported by the sword, was not liberty of conscience and freedom of profession, but the "decrees of provincial and national synods."* They thus, as a natural consequence, became aristocratic themselves, and denied the authority of the people.

The principles of the Quakers, repeatedly declared and summed up by William Penn, were, that "the object of government is to support power with reverence to the people, and to secure the people from the abuse of power."† I have before alluded to the anti-toleration principles in New England; the London Presbyterian ministers in their confession of faith, say, "The last error they witness against, and in which all agree, is called the error of **TOLERATION**, patronizing and promoting all other errors, heresies, and blasphemies whatsoever, under the grossly abused notion of liberty of conscience."*

Penn says, liberty of conscience is the first step to religion. "I have written," he says, "many

* Neal's Hist. Puritans, London edition, 1768, vol. I. pp. 136, 137, and vol. III. p. 360.

† Proud's History of Pennsylvania.

apologies to defend it." "No party could ever bias me to the prejudice of my country, nor any personal interest oblige me to her wrong."

"Till I saw my friends, with the kingdom delivered from the legal bondage, which penal laws, for religion, had subjected them to, I could, with no satisfaction, think of leaving England; * * * having in all this time never had either office or pension, and always refusing the rewards, or gratuities, of those I have been able to oblige."*

The first article of the constitution of Pennsylvania was in these words: "In reverence to God, the father of lights and spirits, the author as well as object of all divine knowledge, faith and worship, I do for me and mine, declare and establish, for the first fundamental of the government of this country, that every person that doth or shall reside therein, shall have and enjoy the free possession of his or her faith, and exercise of worship toward God, in such way and manner as every such person shall in conscience believe is most acceptable to God."†

These principles were declared at the period when the courts in Massachusetts exhibited the deplorable infatuation of condemning innocent persons to be hung as witches, and were carrying on bitter religious persecutions. We have already

* Penn's letter to Popple.

† See Historical Register for the year 1723, pp. 107, 108.

seen the distress and desolation which resulted from the Puritan faith. Among the Quakers we shall find enlarged views of human nature; a manliness and freedom of action, and the most comprehensive views of civil and religious liberty which had ever been practically carried into effect. Their different views may be still further explained by adverting to the remarks of the Quaker woman and the priest, referred to on a preceding page. The woman said, "the spirit of God is our rule," the priest replied, "it is not mine, and I hope never will be."

As a necessary consequence of the Quaker faith, they were led to an introversion of mind, where alone they could have any true knowledge of the nature of man. This taught them to reject most of those artificial forms and ceremonies, which many other sects deemed so essential. The leading point of all their discourses was individual accountability every day of their lives; and, of course, any idea that one day was more holy than another, was inconsistent with such a religion. As a day of rest and recreation, they could unite with it; but in direct opposition to the Puritans, the non-observance of the Sabbath, as a holy day, became one of their leading doctrines. Whether such opinions tend to the debasement of morals, as is pretended by Sabbatarians, impartial history may decide. I

quote the sentiments of the Quakers relative to the first day of the week from Barclay. His opponent had said “John was in the spirit on the Lord’s day,* therefore the first day of the week ought to be kept;” Barclay replied, “how hangs this together? Prove that John meant the first day of the week. We read much in Scripture of the Day of the Lord, which is the Lord’s day; but nowhere do we find it called the first day of the week, or any other natural day; for it is spiritual: and as God called the natural light, day, so he calleth the spiritual light of his appearance, day.” Again, “If ye keep one day for his resurrection, why not one day for his conception, another for his birth, another for the annunciation of the angel, another for his being crucified, another for his ascension? and then we shall not want holy days in good store.” In his Apology he says—“We, not seeing any ground in Scripture for it, cannot be so superstitious as to believe that either the Jewish Sabbath now continues, or that the first day of the week is the anti-type thereof, or the true Christian Sabbath; which, with Calvin, we believe to have a more

* I may here observe, that the authority of the whole book called “the Revelations,” from which this extract is taken, has been a subject of dispute among the earliest writers of the Christian era. Many of them did not consider it genuine, and it is not known who was its real author.

spiritual sense; and therefore we know no moral obligation by the fourth commandment or elsewhere, to keep the first day of the week more than any other, or as any holiness inherent in it."

Such is the doctrine of the Quakers. It was the result of those principles which enabled them to endure the bitterest persecutions in England, with unshaken constancy, without, in any one instance, plotting or contriving the injury of those who were oppressing them. They were beaten and abused, but they remained unchanged; they sought for no power or distinction among men; they yielded not to the government, but the government yielded to them.

The conduct of the two sects to the Indians was equally remarkable. The Puritans, believing the Indians to be heathens, whom it was lawful to destroy, carried on against them the most desolating wars. The Pequods first, and afterwards the Narragansetts, with king Philip at their head, were nearly exterminated by the sword. Men, women and children were butchered, or burnt in their wigwams; some of the prisoners were publicly executed in Boston, many others were sold in the West Indies as slaves.*

In contradistinction to this, I subjoin the follow-

* Hutchinson's History.

ing simple and beautiful letter from William Penn to the Indians. It is delightful to contemplate such sentiments, proceeding as they did from the pure principles of peace.

“London, the 18th of 8th Mo., 1681.

“My Friends,

“There is a great God and power that hath made the world, and all things therein; to whom you and I, and all people, owe their being and well being; to whom you and I must one day give an account for all that we do in the world. This great God hath written his law in our hearts, by which we are taught and commanded to love and help, and do good to one another, and not to do harm and mischief one to another. Now this great God hath been pleased to make me concerned in your part of the world, and the king of the country where I live, hath given me a great province therein. But I desire to enjoy it with your love and consent, that we may always live together as neighbours and friends. Else what would the great God do to us who hath made us not to devour and destroy one another, but to live soberly and kindly in the world? * * * * * I have great love and regard towards you; and I desire to win and gain your love and friendship by a kind, just, and peaceable life; and the people I send are of the same mind,

and shall in all things behave themselves accordingly. And if in any thing any shall offend you, or your people, you shall have a full and speedy satisfaction for the same, by an equal number of just men on both sides, that by no means you may have just occasion of being offended against them. I shall shortly come to you myself, at which time we may more largely and freely confer and discourse of these matters. In the mean time I have sent my commissioners to treat with you about land, and a firm league of peace. Let me desire you to be kind to them and the people, and receive these presents and tokens which I have sent you as a testimony of my good will to you, and my resolution to live justly, peaceably, and friendly with you.*

“I am your loving friend,
“W. PENN.”

In the first law made by Penn are these words: “No man shall, by any way or means, or in word or deed, affront or wrong any Indian, but he shall incur the same penalty of the law as if he had committed it against his fellow planter. All differences between the planters and the natives shall be ended by twelve men—six planters, and six natives,” &c.*

* Proud's Hist. Pennsylvania.

Coming among the Indians with feelings of hostility, the Puritans believed them to be a treacherous people, unworthy to be trusted.

The Quakers, with the olive branch of peace, found them kind and docile, easily to be entreated. They went in and out among them, never drew a sword nor fired a gun, and their dominion was everywhere one of peace.

I have seen an unpublished letter from James Logan, who had the principal direction of Indian affairs for nearly half a century, in which he says, 'that whatever he might have been in other respects, to the Indians he was always kind, humane, and generous.' It produced an effect on them which has never been effaced to the present day. Previous to Jay's treaty the influence of the Quakers with the Indians was so great, that General Washington encouraged several distinguished members of the society* to accompany General Lincoln and others to Detroit, in the hope of being able to effect a peace: and I have in my possession letters from a Senator of the United States, during the administration of Jefferson, proposing that the Quakers

* The names of the commissioners were Governor Lincoln, Beverly Randolph, and Timothy Pickering.

The Quakers, John Parrish, William Savery, Jacob Lindley, John Elliott, Joseph Moore.

should take the whole management of the Indian affairs.

Even at this day there are townships in which the Quaker influence has prevailed, where there is no one willing to accept the office of magistrate, because there is no occasion for one. In one township there is no tavern, no magistrate, no constable, no clergyman, no lawyer. In another, thickly settled, it is said, there has never been a case of assault and battery since its first settlement, a period of more than a hundred years. These people, though they open their meeting-houses for public worship on the first day and other days of the week, in conformity with the practice of the early Christians, yet they are, as defined above, to use a modern sectarian term, "desecrators of the Sabbath."

If these facts can be sustained, the conclusion is irresistible, that so far as respects the Puritans and the Quakers, the position taken by the Sabbath conventions, and by many sectarians, "that man is purified by attending to the fourth commandment, and making one day more holy than another," is absolutely false.

The reign of the Sabbatarians in England was the era of cant and hypocrisy. The opinions of historians are so evidently biassed by their own prejudices, that no certain reliance is to be placed upon them. It was a period peculiarly marked by

private feuds and public animosities, by local and national calamities, to be traced in a great measure to the unrelenting sectarianism of the age; these are indications of character which do not show a refinement in national morals.

The same observations apply to this country. The events to which I have adverted, form the most authentic data which the world can furnish; without them, I should still say, that the basis upon which the Sabbatarians rest their arguments is wrong in principle.

Laws may be enforced for the observance of the first day of the week, but all other things being equal, if there is any one State in this Union where the Sabbath is more attended to than in the others, and I do not know that there is such a State, the morals of the inhabitants will, I believe, be found to be injured thereby.

An instance of the greatest barbarity towards the Indians occurred in Pennsylvania, not exceeded by any in New England, in which feelings similar to those of the Puritans were manifested, and the same language used.

Some furious zealots among the preachers of the Presbyterians, under the notion of extirpating the heathen from the earth, as Joshua did of old, surrounded a small settlement in the Conestoga manor, burnt their wigwams, and butchered all the people

they could find. The magistrates of Lancaster brought the others into the workhouse, a strong building, as a place of safety; they were followed; the workhouse was broken open, and every one of them, men, women and children, were murdered in cold blood.*

The account does not mention, but I have no doubt of the fact, as they were of the same sect, that they were men zealous for the observance of the Sabbath-day. It was perfectly consistent that they should observe all the parts of the Mosaic law.

I do but justice to my subject, in bringing into juxtaposition, extracts from three remarkable addresses to king Charles II. on his restoration, in order to show the aspect of Sabbatarian and Anti-Sabbatarian doctrines, when they approach royalty. Either of them is too long to be inserted here, but I believe I preserve the spirit of each in the portions I have selected. They fully sustain the character of the two people as developed in these pages.

Each address alludes to the persecutions to which their party had been subject, and seems to ask the interposition of the king.

The Puritans say:

* See Proud's History of Pennsylvania, vol. II.

“Most Gracious and dread
Sovereign:

“May it please your majesty in the day wherein you happily say, you now know, that you are again king over your British Israel, to cast a favourable eye upon your poor Mephibo-seths now, and by reason of lameness, in respect of distance, not until now, appearing in your presence, we mean New England, kneeling, with the rest of your subjects, before your majesty, as her restored king. * * * * We present this scrip, the transcript of our loyal hearts, into your royal hands, wherein we crave leave:

“To supplicate your majesty for your gracious protection of us, in the continuance of our civil privileges. * * * *

“With a religious salutation of our prayers, we (prostrate at your royal feet) beg pardon for this our boldness; craving finally that our names may be enrolled among your majesty’s most humble subjects and supplicants.”

“To the King’s most excellent majesty.

“The humble supplication of

“To Charles 2nd, King, &c.

“Robert Barclay, a servant of Jesus Christ, called of God to the dispensation of the gospel, wishes health and salvation. As it is inconsistent with the truth I bear, so it is far from me to use this epistle as an engine to flatter thee. * * * To God alone I owe what I have, and that more immediately in matters spiritual; and therefore to him alone, and to the service of His truth, I dedicate whatever work he brings forth in me.

“Thou hast tasted of prosperity and adversity; thou knowest what it is to be banished thy native country, to be overruled as well as to rule, and sit upon the throne; and being oppressed, thou hast reason to know how hateful the oppression is both to God and man.

“God hath done great things for thee; he hath sufficiently shown thee, that it is by Him princes rule, and that he can pull down and set up at his pleasure. He hath often faithfully warned thee by his servants, since he restored thee to thy royal dignity, that thy heart

the General Court of the Massachusett Colony in New England.

“Dread Sovereign:

“If your poor subjects, who have removed themselves into a remote corner of the earth to enjoy peace with God and man, do, in this day of their trouble, prostrate themselves at your royal feet, and beg your favour, we hope it will be graciously accepted by your majesty. And that as the high place you sustain on earth, doth number you here among the gods, so you will imitate the God of heaven, in being ready to maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor, and to receive their cries and addresses to that end.”*

might not wax wanton against him to forget his mercies and providence towards thee; whereby he might permit thee to be soothed up and lulled asleep in thy sins by the flattering of court parasites, who by their fawning are the ruin of many princes.

“God Almighty, who hath so signally hitherto visited thee with his love, so touch and reach thy heart, ere the day of thy visitation be expired, that thou mayst effectually turn to him so as to improve thy place and station for his name. So wisheth, so prayeth,

“Thy faithful friend and subject,

“ROBERT BARCLAY.”†

Considering the great hostility the Puritans had evinced towards royalty, that they had been chiefly instrumental in the dethronement of king Charles I., these epistles to his son may be considered as evincing the perfection of cant and hypocrisy.

Voltaire, in his letters concerning the English

* Notes to Marshall's Life of Washington, and Hutchinson's History.

† Barclay's Works.

nation, says of this letter of Robert Barclay, “This epistle is not filled with mean flattering encomiums, but abounds with bold touches in favour of truth, and with the wisest counsels;” and he adds, “it was so happy in its effects, as to put an end to persecutions against the Quakers.”*

In the imperfections of men every thing is liable to abuse; there is a vein of enthusiasm in the human mind, which men catch at, and it leads them astray.

There were decided marks of fanaticism in the early existence both of the Puritans and the Quakers. It has existed in all sects, and always will exist as the fruit of imperfection. Whilst sects are composed of a mass of individuals more or less imperfect, societies will always be obnoxious to censure. Principles are not to be judged by things which may be considered as exceptions to general rules. There was this remarkable difference in the two cases, that in the Puritans it settled down into cool deliberate bigotry, intolerance, and bloodshed; among the Quakers it resulted in the most noble and enlarged views of human nature—and they maintained a peace such as had never before been seen, with a people, who were deemed by other sects, to be infidels and barbarians.

* Bayle's Dictionary, vol. II., p. 657.

This remarkable difference was not the effect of chance, and its causes are worthy the attention of every intelligent mind. There are but two principles of action, truth and falsehood. All will admit, I think, at the present day, that what the Puritans called their religion, as respects these things, was superstition and intolerance; but it was not more intolerant than the principles of the modern Sabbatarians. They have the same views, they speak the same language, and refer to the same doctrines. As individuals, they may be good and excellent men, but it is the nature of sectarianism to debase the character. Hence it is, that men acting as bodies, do things that they would abhor as individuals, and the tender mercies of the present Sabbatarians are not to be trusted. In the progress of society, public executions for heresy, are no longer permitted. All with one accord would revolt from such spectacles; but in reality there is just as much reason to object to the doctrines promulgated by the Sabbatarians of the present day. Is it to truth, or equity, or justice, that they refer? No such thing! It is to the Mosaic code, to the ten commandments; and these being first established as of supreme authority, truth is to be moulded thereto. This was the great source of error in the Puritans; it is written ordinances that at the present day are the source of those complex notions

and opinions on the subject of religion, from which so many honest and sincere minds turn away in disgust.

Of course, the more men have of such a religion as this, if religion it may be called, the worse they are; and there is evidence to show that the ministers and elders were more rigorous and severe than the common people. The great source of truth is in man's own bosom; when he departs from that, he erects altars to strange gods which betray him. He is cast afloat on the great ocean of uncertainty, and he takes up with any doctrine which may coincide with his own preconceived opinions. The Puritans, as I have said before, were not intrinsically bad men. The chief justice in Boston, after he had condemned many innocent persons to die, declared that he had acted in the fear of the Lord. He was but the executor of the law; the sectarian legislators were more to blame than he. With all their pretensions they had not learned the first lesson in religion.

It is a noble but a costly victim, involving often our dearest prejudices, to offer on the altar of truth our own self love. But until men do this, they might as well expect to sow their grain in the desert and reap a harvest, as to be able clearly to distinguish right from wrong. The Puritans set up the supremacy of their own church, of their

own faith and doctrines, and made truth yield thereto. Depending upon the observance of the outward Sabbath, they seemed to know nothing of the true Sabbath, of the silent but all powerful operation of truth in men's minds. They denied that the Spirit of God was their guide, and with the New Testament in their hands, they endeavoured to establish the Mosaic code. They had been persecuted, and not understanding the powerful influence of the principles of peace, revenge was engendered, to be wreaked upon all who might come in their way. From being persecuted, they came to be persecutors themselves.

If they had had good and true hearts, they would have found some standard of justice on which to have founded their ordinances, without going back to the Mosaic code. There are sentiments and feelings to be developed within us, as exalted as ever existed in any other people. We may talk of ancient sages, and of the philosophers of other generations, but what sources of truth had they that we have not?

The laws of all countries necessarily take their type from the character of the people: those of one nation can never be exactly adapted to another, because no two were ever under precisely the same circumstances.

The only true foundation for the laws and ordi-

nances of men, is that sense of justice and truth, which can alone adapt them to our respective situations. It is that which purifies and elevates every individual, so far as he adheres to it; and as it elevates individuals, it perfects nations.

Locke, the great writer on the human mind, always professed religion, and yet his doctrine went to destroy it. He travelled far to find some nation destitute of religious belief, by which he could establish his theory, but he found none! In place of that sublime science, the study of the man within, inhabiting, in the whole scope of the intellect, a world more extensive than the world without us, his doctrine taught that we were to look to the senses for the knowledge of truth, that it was there alone that it was to be found.

It was this false principle that blinded the eyes of the Puritans, so that they were unable to distinguish right from wrong. They thought they were Christians, while they were worse than barbarians.

We see an apple fall to the ground, under the unchanging laws of gravity, without seeming to consider that the laws of mind are equally immutable.

To use a favourite expression of the Puritans, they acted "by the eternal decrees of God;" their moral principles were debased by what they called their religion; and their conduct was in unison

therewith. They laid claim to the greatest holiness; some of them even went so far as to say that Jesus Christ was the first Puritan. The good men among them, were made so, not by what they called their religion, but in despite of it; and this applies to every individual who is seeking for religion through the medium of the senses. They advocate the idea that there is nothing in the mind that has not been in the senses. This was the doctrine that Locke and Hobbes, and men of that school, tried to establish, to which Leibnitz, the German philosopher, made this reply: "Nothing except the intellect itself;" and no man, however acute, has been able to deny this position. But whether or not, it has little bearing to the practical man, who may easily understand that we can have no real knowledge of truth, virtue, and godliness, from the opinions of other men. If it was necessary, and this the proper place, I might advert to the singularly discordant and heterogeneous constitution Locke himself furnished for the Carolinas. It manifested how an eminent writer on the human mind, might be entirely ignorant of the nature of man. The constitution produced nothing but animosity till it was abandoned.*

The doctrines neither of the Puritans nor the

* See Washington's Life, vol. I.

Quakers were ever fully carried out; those of the Puritans, so far as they led the minds of men to the senses, to the eye, or the ear, as the source of truth, naturally led to the destruction of all religion. This influence was continually checked by that grace of God which the priest denied to be his rule, but which was still operating to save them from further degradation. If it had not been so, all the noble feelings of human nature would have been destroyed; and instead of persecuting those only who were aliens, they would, as it suited their selfishness, have cut each other's throats.

The errors of the Puritans have been acknowledged by their relaxing and abandoning all their laws, while the Quakers hold on their way. As a sect, they may rise or fall—that on the broad scale is of little consequence—while their principles gather strength from generation to generation, and these are likely to endure till a ceremonial religion shall be abandoned, as it now is, to a considerable extent, in every enlightened mind, and until the distinction of days shall be done away. That man, whoever he may be, and wherever found, without regard to sect or nation, who is conscientiously pursuing the path of duty, according to the sense of right which he may find in his own bosom, is purified and elevated thereby, though he may attend no church, and work every day in the week.

The history of the Puritans and the Quakers, however imperfectly their principles may have been developed, exhibits, in a remarkable degree, the difference between a religion that had for a primary object the observance of the Sabbath day, and one that, without making any distinction, sought to do right every day in the week. I advert to the Quakers only to illustrate a principle; all that is valuable in their doctrines is common to the whole human family. Whatever men may think of their sectarianism, and of that there can be but one opinion, their exertions have tended to ameliorate the condition of society;* and in this State, they resulted in a purer government than had ever been maintained before. They have proved that society can exist without war, when in all similar cases the sword was deemed absolutely needful: they have proved that society can exist

* The ascendancy of the Quakers in the province of Pennsylvania, ceased about the time of the old French war, when Braddock was defeated, after they had held it about seventy years, because they did not choose to imbrue their hands in the blood of their fellow men. A vast number of people had come into the province, who were aliens to principles of peace; fighting was a necessary consequence, and they abandoned the government. The venerable Isaac Norris, a distinguished Quaker, for many years speaker of the house of representatives, solicited year after year not to be elected, but they refused all his entreaties, and continued to elect him until he would stay no longer.

better without than with an established clergy: they have proved, and are still proving, the errors that are promulgated by Sabbath conventions, and by Sabbatarians of every grade; and I may ask every candid and inquiring mind, whether views that produce such extraordinary results, are to be easily abandoned or lightly esteemed.*

It has been my lot to know many excellent and virtuous individuals, who practically carried these principles into effect. One, an eminent and distinguished minister in the Society of Friends, respected and esteemed by all, worked in his fields on that day as often as it suited him to do so, and frequently expressed the satisfaction he derived from it. It accorded with his sense of right, and I never heard of inconvenience or loss resulting to him or others from such a course.

The leading principle of the Quakers, so true, and so exalted as it is, has been so much mixed up with sectarianism, with creeds, and peculiarities of discipline, and of dress, the natural effects of imperfection, and perhaps inherent in the nature of sects, but which have nothing to do with religion, that the world seems never to have given them credit for what they really deserve. It is other-

* See Works of Sidney Smith. Article Quakers.

wise with the Puritans. Their principles are not identified with those of the present inhabitants of New England, they have generally rejected them; still their statesmen appear to be disposed to give them praise where they never deserved it. They seem to depend upon the ignorance and credulity of the people, when they ascribe the civil and religious liberty of this country to the Puritan fathers.* Even the present season it is proposed for the people to give thanks *by law* for their Puritan descent.†

The opinions I have expressed are my own; whether sects or parties of men shall be pleased or displeased, has not been a subject of consideration. My only object has been, to elucidate great principles in morals, which have no relation to sects.

Every age and country bears witness to the demoralizing effects of a ceremonial religion governed by formal rules. The Suttees of Hindostan suffer themselves to be consumed on the funeral piles of their husbands, from the perversion of what they deem the holy books of the Vedas.

* The Roman Catholics of Maryland, and the Baptists of Rhode Island, deserve much more credit than the Puritans.

† See Governor Briggs' proclamation of the present season for Thanksgiving day.

The Jews said, "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die."

Mahometanism and Mormonism, Romanism and Calvinism, and all the peculiar doctrines of sects through which they persecute each other, even unto death, are to be traced to this one source. The great moral principles of human nature, are the same throughout the world. As men depart from these, the reformation of society is retarded, and people become so benighted, as publicly to declare, that no nation nor individual can be correct, who does not hold one day more holy than another.

Perfection is not claimed for any class in society; but there is a simplicity in truth, a purity in virtue, an unostentatious performance of the every day duties of life, which is totally distinct from all sectarian movements, and which is the sum and substance of vital religion. The errors of the Sabbatarians may be shown in many ways.

The Germans, as a class, both Protestants and Catholics, are remarkable for a non-observance of the first day of the week; they are equally remarkable for the simplicity of their character. I make the following extracts from two works on Germany.

"Nowhere on the continent, not even in Protestant Germany, is the keeping of Sunday regarded as in England. Shops remain in a great measure open; all sorts of theatres and places of amusement

are open; and the people look on the strictness of England, as a species of gloomy ascetic severity, which makes no part of real religion.” Again: “On Sunday, great numbers of shops in most towns are open, things are brought home from different makers as on another day, and ladies sit knitting in company as usual.”

The same author, after speaking much of the general superior moral character of the Germans, concludes by saying, “We may safely assert, that there is no country in Europe, in which there is so great an amount of comfort and contentment enjoyed. All are industrious, moderate in their desires, and disposed to enjoy themselves in a simple and unexpensive sociality.”*

From another work I extract the following: “It may be said, to the glory of the German nation, that she is almost incapable of that practised suppleness which makes all truths bend to all interests, and sacrifices every engagement to every calculation. * * * Religion in Germany exists in the very bottom of the heart. * * * The honesty of the inhabitants was such, that a proprietor at Leipsic having fixed on an apple tree (which he had planted on the borders of the public walk) a notice, desiring that people would not gather the fruit, not a single

* *Rural and Domestic Life in Germany*, by William Howitt.

apple was stolen from it for ten years. I have seen this apple tree with a feeling of respect; had it been the tree of the Hesperides, they would no more have touched its golden fruit than its blossom.”*

I am not supposing that people are made better simply by not keeping one day more holy than the rest; this would be as false an opinion as that of the Sabbatarians. They are made better by a purified life, which has no regard for days.

No doubt the Germans have their imperfections like other people; my only object is to shew that they are not debased by their non-observance of the Sabbath; that they are not worse than other nations who are strict in the observance of the day.

The Mahometans are said to keep the Sabbath with more strictness than any other people. True, it may be that they are not Christians; but of what consequence is this; they hold to the Scriptures as strictly as we do; and the Harrisburg Convention says, “The Sabbath is the medium through which all the accumulated light of ages past, (ages of prophecy, of miracle, and of redemption,) comes to the present generation; it is practically as valuable as the cross which it reveals, the salvation which it proffers, and the undying spirits which it saves.” These men ought not to object to Mahometans be-

* Holstein’s Germany.

cause they are not Christians. I leave it for those who are well acquainted with the character of the Turks to say, whether they have been refined and purified by their observance of the Sabbath day.

But I need not go to distant times, and to foreign countries, to elucidate my position. In the Boston work referred to, this paragraph occurs: "A distinguished merchant, long accustomed to extensive observation and experience, and who had gained an uncommon knowledge of men, said, 'When I see one of my apprentices or clerks riding out on the Sabbath, on Monday I dismiss him. Such a one cannot be trusted.' "

I know not who the merchant was, nor where he lived; but I hesitate not in the opinion, that he lived in some country where it was deemed necessary to keep one day more holy than the rest, and the morals of the people were degraded by it. Society was burthened with unnecessary forms—people were made offenders, where no evil was committed, and the necessary consequence followed—a depravity of morals.

Such a thing could not have occurred in any other place. It has been my lot to witness the management of large mercantile and manufacturing concerns; I have been an attentive observer of the events passing before me. Those persons who have been in the capacity of clerks and apprentices, filling

highly responsible situations, have been seen and encouraged to ride out on the first day of the week, whenever it suited them to do so; and it is not a few of them that have come under my own immediate observation, and I have not known one of them, in a period of many years, to be a defaulter in any way; nor did the idea of such an event, from such a cause, ever enter into my mind. If the account is true, and it is published, I suppose, for truth, the conclusion seems inevitable, that the merchant referred to has been associated with persons whose morals are more degraded than those in some other parts of the country.

Before entering into a more particular consideration of Sabbath Conventions, I may say, that I design no disrespect to the individual members. There is not a feeling in my mind that would call in question the entire right which they have to hold their own opinions, and to sustain them by any arguments which they may think proper. But when they attempt to cast odium upon men who differ from themselves, and denounce judgments upon them, not only in this life, but in a life to come—thus arrogating to themselves a power which has never been given to them—when they profess to take the Scriptures for their rule of faith and practice, and then pervert them to the injury of their fellow men, it may be considered a matter of

some interest to shew, that according to their own professed authority, they have no license for their conduct, no argument to support them.

Few men are free from superstition, and it would be equally rare to find that man in whom the simplicity of religion was fully developed. Pascal, called by Bayle, “one of the sublimest geniuses the world ever produced,” kept what was called a spiritual almanac, and spent some years of his life in visiting those churches where the bones of martyrs were exhibited, and in practising solemnities connected with them, peculiar to the Romish church.* Yet he is represented to have been a singularly humble minded Christian. A thousand instances might be given of sincere and devoted feelings connected with gross superstitions.

The Sabbatarians, when they bring up the laws of Moses, may be ranked among the relic-hunters of former days. Their views upon the subject, appear to be entirely the result of superstition; when put in practice they produce intolerance; but it does not follow, that, in other points of character, they may not be good men; and in writing very plainly about these conventions, as I must do, if I write at all, I call not in question the individual integrity of the members.

* Pascal's Life, by his Sister, Mrs. Perier, p. 40.

Having stated that there is no authority of any kind to sanction a religious observance of particular days, and enforced it by the doctrines of the New Testament, I may now add, that those writings speak equally distinctly of a Christian Sabbath, which has no application to any particular time; but to that quiet and rest, which is the result of conscious integrity, which no man can give or take from his fellow man; which applies to every individual on the face of the earth, to the learned man and the ignorant man, to the prince and the beggar. This Sabbath is enforced by no law; it is interrupted by none of the ordinances of men; it is referred to abundantly, both in the Old and New Testaments. Without making quotations, I will mention only the fourth chapter of the Hebrews. Though they give it no name, men feel it, and understand it, in their everyday walks of life, in their intercourse with society, in attending to all the complicated duties of their existence. It belongs to no sect, to no church, to no nation or colour; it is as applicable to the boatman navigating the canal on Sunday, and to the travellers on our rail-roads on that day, as to any other class of society. This is the only Christian Sabbath; I could sustain this opinion by abundant quotations from the writings of honest and estimable men of every age and station. If it is true, these Sabbatarians, with all their

professions, are the real Sabbath-breakers! Such surely they are! The question resolves itself simply into this, whether the laws of Moses, or the doctrines of the New Testament, are of paramount authority. I have no object but truth; I have nothing to gain or to lose by sustaining any particular opinion; but if there is truth in the New Testament, there is but one Christian Sabbath. Its pages, as I have heretofore shown, reject a Sabbath of days, and sustain the other, and those who adopt any other opinion may, in this respect, be considered to be under the legal Jewish dispensation.

From the sentiments of Calvin, Penn, and others, which I have quoted, it seems to follow, as a necessary consequence, that the observance of days is only to be considered as a dead weight and burthen on society, and hence productive of evil.

Pennington, a minister of the gospel, of extraordinary character, after saying very distinctly and at large, that the authority of the ten commandments is abrogated, carries the doctrine of Calvin and Penn to its legitimate issue. Speaking of the true Christian Sabbath, he says, "whosoever now runs back to the law in the letter, to take up any command as held forth in it, will be found a breaker thereof in spirit, even one that hath more gods than the Lord, a maker of images or likenesses of things in heaven, or things in earth, if not of both, a

taker of the name in vain, a profaner of the Sabbath.”* This is plain doctrine, and it is no more plain than true. It equally applies to all the Sabbath conventions, and to every individual, who, rejecting the true Christian Sabbath, is endeavouring to enforce a Sabbath of days. It was from the radical unsoundness of their opinions upon the subject, that the Harrisburg Convention before referred to, found such difficulty in deciding whether the day should be called “Sabbath,” “Christian Sabbath,” or “Lord’s Day;” and in the National Convention, recently held in Baltimore, the question, “which was the Lord’s day,” was productive, according to the report which has been published, of a long dispute, and called forth “much feeling, intemperate zeal, and harsh expressions.”

This was in harmony with the doctrines themselves; they produced, as we have seen, discord and animosity in Old and in New England, substituting cant and hypocrisy for the vitality of truth; and so far as the people of these United States may be induced to adopt them, it may be considered to be both an individual and national calamity. Sabbath conventions are everywhere of the same character, they speak the same language, and hence what may be said of one, will apply to all.

* Pennington’s Works, part 1st, p. 259, folio.

An ex-president of the United States presided over the one held at Baltimore, declaring first that he did not understand the subject, and quoting, as the account says, the text before referred to, which was uttered as part of a reproof to the Jews for their observance of the Sabbath-day: "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."

I have not leisure for any extensive consideration of the subjects brought into view, but I shall touch upon some of the most prominent in their proper places.

After having exhausted many efforts of a compulsory nature, they now speak of using only persuasive means to effect their object. How sincere soever they may be, this in its nature is impossible, their prejudices are certain to betray them. The tree brings forth fruit according to its kind, and the spirit of peace, which alone produces kindness and good feeling among men, is not evinced on a single page of any of the Sabbath works which I have seen.

We are told, by an unanimous vote of the Harrisburg Convention, that if we withhold our contributions to the funds necessary to maintain the families of the missionaries, "we and our children must abide the fearful consequences here and hereafter."

This is not persuasion, it is denunciation!

These conventions bear the names of state and national conventions; but the people at large have very little interest in them. Four-fifths of the persons in attendance at Harrisburg, were from four or five of the neighbouring counties, or from those whence access was easiest. Two synods of Presbyterian clergymen were represented, (for such I understand to be the meaning of the word “classes;”*) and in one instance which came under my observation, in a population of several hundred voters, about twenty persons met in a Presbyterian church, and appointed six of their number to represent that district.

This I suppose to be a fair instance of the way in which the delegates to such conventions are appointed. They appear to be almost entirely the work of clergymen; it is *they* who take the active part in all the proceedings; *they* are made to sing their own praises to an extent highly remarkable; and an intention is everywhere evident to support the clerical influence.

People may honestly take different views of the same subject; but when writers descend to false reasoning, and puerile statements, in order, as it would seem, to influence men who have not time to examine or reflect for themselves, they pursue a

* Hume’s History of England, vol. VI. p. 335, note.

course in which honourable men would hardly be willing to follow them. This applies peculiarly to the proceedings of Sabbath conventions. The minds of the members seem to be deeply tinctured with superstition and prejudice, and, in my apprehension, there is scarcely a statement they publish, which, in all its bearings, is strictly true.

The observations I make I shall class under the following heads:

First—The judgments of the Lord upon Sabbath-breakers.

Second—The records that the inmates of our prisons are generally Sabbath-breakers.

Third—The influence of the Sabbath on man in a physical point of view.

Fourth—The descent of property.

Fifth—The influence of the clergy.

Sixth—Arguments drawn from closing the courts on Sunday.

First, as to the judgments of the Lord.

It is at variance with facts, and the common sense observations of the age, that the judgments of the Lord are peculiarly heaped upon Sabbath-breakers. If there is any truth in these pages, Sabbath-breakers, as they are called by sectarians, are not worse than any other class of society. Even if they were bad men, the rain descends and the sun shines upon them, and the providence of God

watches continually over them for good. The ideas promulgated upon this subject are calculated to operate upon the fears of the people, and appear to be founded wholly in delusion and superstition.

One of the conventions recommends that the facts relative to "the voice of God in his providence" for violating the Sabbath, be collected and circulated. The Boston work enumerates a great number of cases of the kind.

It says that a man and his wife were so anxious to arrive in New York in time to take the steam-boat Lexington, that they travelled a great portion of the Sabbath, arrived in season, took the boat and perished.

It is not alleged that the hundred others who lost their lives on that occasion were Sabbath-breakers, and if this fact proves anything, it proves too much. That it was not the Sabbath-breakers who were the peculiar objects of divine wrath, but the Sabbath-keepers! or that for the sake of punishing this one Sabbath-breaker and his wife, ninety and nine innocent persons perished!

One man lost his barn by lightning as a judgment for violating the Sabbath; another from a fire communicated from a gun; others failed; some were not equally successful in making salt who worked on Sunday; some did not succeed in fishing, and the like. Such reasoning may suit super-

stitution, but it deserves very little attention from rational minds.

Perhaps some of the men who have promulgated these sentiments, have been themselves sufferers, have had their barns burnt, and been subjected to distress and difficulty of various kinds. Do these things never happen to those who keep the Sabbath? There are cars that have, for a number of years, started from Philadelphia as regularly on the first day of the week as on any other day. Have they been more subject to accidents on that day? Have the cars broken down, and the passengers been maimed and killed? This was a fair opportunity of testing the truth of their positions, but no such inquiry seems to have been made, only, as it would seem, because the truth was not wanted.

In the midst of their professions of using nothing but "persuasion," their object appears to have been to use fear and superstition to effect their purpose. The National Convention, in its address to the people of the United States, degrades itself by saying, that we are warned by the "awful providences of God" against the profanation of their Christian Sabbath. I hesitate not to say that the statement is not true.

Respecting the inmates of our prisons.

It is said that a large proportion of such persons did not value the Sabbath, and were in the habit of

profaning it, and a false argument is founded thereon, that this is the principal cause of their errors. Men of depraved minds will naturally profane the Sabbath, but they equally profane every other day in the week. Pious and good men, who are opposed to the movements of the Sabbatarians, and object to Sabbath conventions, and whom they term "desecrators of the Sabbath," are as much opposed, nay, more than sectarians are likely to be, to profaneness of any kind whatever.

As I have stated in the foregoing pages, the efforts of these conventions are directed against those who are peculiarly Sabbath-breakers—against men who are pursuing their lawful callings during six days, and are not, to use their own expression, "giving the seventh peculiarly unto God."

"Six days of the week alone are the property of mankind for the performance of secular business—the seventh belongs to God, and whosoever does not devote one day in seven to the worship of our Heavenly Father, is a robber of God." This sentiment is published as the third resolution of the National Sabbath Convention; it contains the shocking idea, that six days belong to man, and but one to God.

Can they show any instance of people who pursue the paths of rectitude, do righteously and justly on six days, and yet are licentious on the first day

of the week? If they can, their argument on this subject may have some force. Have the inmates of our prisons been of this character? Surely not! I presume no such instance can be found, and yet they speak of it as if it was so.

But let us look at the other side of the question. How many Sabbath-keepers are violating the moral law! How many are robbing the poor of their bread! Are these debased by keeping the Sabbath? There is as much argument on one side of the question as on the other.

Such reasoning may suit sectarians, but it does not suit honesty and truth. It is unjust to attempt to cast opprobrium upon honest and excellent men, because the inmates of our prisons have profaned that day in common with every other.

I have stated that there was but one Christian Sabbath, and the only real breakers of it, are those who are attempting to establish another in its place. But taking the ground of the Sabbatarians, and using their own misnomer, it may safely be said, not only that all the inmates of our prisons, but that the whole community are Sabbath-breakers. The members of these conventions are far from keeping the day as they acknowledge it ought to be kept; none of them come up to the Jewish standard—few to that which was established by the Puritans, nor to their own standard of right; and without laying

the sin particularly to the inmates of our prisons, they should first lay it at their own door.

The people of the New England states are often referred to as keeping the Sabbath more strictly than some others. I have long been of the opinion, from a general course of reasoning upon the subject, that if the prisons of this country were examined, there would be found to be more natives of New England in them, in comparison with the population of those states, than of any other part of the Union. If it is not so, it would probably be because their greater skill enables them to elude the shackles of the law. Knowledge is power, as well for evil as for good.

An unpropitious soil has led them to greater thrift and industry; and this, though highly estimable in itself, has had its attendant evils, from which an artificial religion has not been able to protect them. The official reports respecting pauperism, show that this evil also exists there to a great extent, perhaps greater than elsewhere under similar circumstances. I have not the tables to refer to, but have seen it stated, that in some places, without embracing those who require transient aid, one fiftieth of the inhabitants are paupers. Whilst I am ready to accord to New England all the merit it deserves, I cannot believe that its Sabbath-keeping habits have improved the morals of the people.

It may have produced cant and hypocrisy, but not truth.

The influence of the Sabbath on man in a physical point of view.

The great physiological truth, that man cannot work unceasingly, is brought forward continually to sustain the “Christian Sabbath” as a religious rite.

No truth is more certain than that there is a maximum to the labours of men and horses, and inanimate machines, which cannot be exceeded without injury.

A locomotive that has seventy miles to travel each day, will perform it with less wear and tear, less friction, less injury, both to the locomotive and to the rail-road, by doing the work in seven hours than in six.

What is true of a locomotive is true of other machines; and it is true also of animals. There is an amount of labour which each will perform in a year, or in any other given time, and that will be accomplished with less injury by a regular division of it, than in any other way. It may be true that a horse on a journey will be better for resting one day in seven; but if so, it is only because the work has been too hard on the other six; so of man, one or two, or three days in seven may be highly necessary to him, as a relief from excessive toil; but it is from causes which in themselves are deviations from

the laws of nature; and in attempting to apply a remedy, if we do not first understand the cause, we are liable to do evil instead of good.

Admitting that the physical nature of man would be benefited by resting one day in seven, and I am not disposed to doubt it as a general truth, it does not follow that that day should be devoted to religious exercises. A particular stress has been laid upon this part of the subject, and many efforts used to enlist the hard working man in favour of resting one day in seven.

Medical and other works are brought forward to sustain the position; but this, like most of their other testimony, proves too much. A day of religious exercise, is not necessarily a day of rest. A practising physician of Philadelphia county, of great experience, whose life has been marked by kindness and consideration to the labouring classes of society, has remarked to the author of these pages upon this point, that great benefit would be likely to result from giving to steamboats, rail-roads, and other conveyances, increased facilities on the first day of the week, that the labouring classes, who were confined on other days, might have the enjoyment and advantage of riding into the country on that day.

In the concern which Sabbatarians profess for the labouring man, would this suit them? Would they

encourage them to leave the confinement of the towns and cities, and ride out into the country? Would they wish them to have the pleasure of visiting their friends, and walking in the fields to enjoy rural scenery? These things for their physical enjoyment would seem to be most natural and proper. There were two instances in which the Sabbatarians had all power in their own hands, in both of which they abused it; they made the most severe laws against every species of rational enjoyment which a labouring man could desire, and which would be most in accordance with his physical nature. It is evident that the same thing would happen now, for they seem as if they would admit of going no where but to church.

I was present, within the last few months, at what was called a religious meeting. I remained for hours a silent observer of the scene before me; one of the members of the convention was himself the chief speaker in the place; and I never witnessed, in the usual labour of men, work so hard, or excitement so violent, as I saw in a number of cases that were that day exhibited. If there is any sincerity in the position that has been taken on this subject by Sabbatarians, these meetings should be at once stopped. But there is not a word said on this subject; nay, the chief actors in them go to Sabbath conventions, and declare the necessity of a day of

rest to the physical frame of man. They build up with one hand and pull down with the other, and think they are doing God service thereby. The clergy themselves appear to be the greatest offenders in this respect. I do not perceive the difference between making merchandise of the labour of a man's head, or of his hands. I do not say that either is wrong, but the principle is the same. Clergymen, who work on the first day, take the liberty of judging, whether they will rest on any other day or not. Many of them probably work every day in the week, but they deny that right to others which they take for themselves.

In this country almost every man is a working man. The judge who sits on the bench, and the merchant who writes in his office, may work as hard, nay, much harder, than he who carries a mattock and labours on the highway.

The one class would be most benefited by a day of rest, the other by a day of activity; and so far as our physical nature is concerned, if our judges and legislators, and all who lead sedentary lives, could be induced to ride out on the first day of the week, and take active exercise, society would be benefited thereby.

These are obvious truths, that can be understood by all. Yet it is proposed to bring the judge and the legislator from one sedentary employment to

another; from the court and the legislative hall to the church; if that, as is sometimes the case, is a place of quietness and rest, still further to violate the laws of nature.

If the views upon this subject, taken by the Sabbatarians, are correct, it is one of the strongest reasons that can be given, for the extension of a perfect liberty of conscience. The idle man, if he could be induced to do so, should go to work, the sedentary man should ride out and take open air in the country, and severe religious exercises should be put a stop to, because nature requires that one day in seven should be held purely as a day of rest and refreshment for the preservation of our physical frames.

No rule of conduct would be of universal application. It is a subject of deep regret that there should be licentiousness on any day; but the reformation, which is so desirable, is, in my apprehension, least of all to be expected from the plans of the modern Sabbatarians. Even if they promised great good, there is one all sufficient reason against them, that they are not founded in truth. Is there no lesson to be learned from the continued activity of the bird and the beast on the first day of the week? Do we see all the operations of nature going on unceasingly, and yet suppose there is an exception in regard to man?

that the immutable laws of nature are changed as respects him; that he alone has been created with an inability to work seven days in the week? Alas for such narrow minded views!

In Scotland first, in this country, and in England next, where the Puritan principles have prevailed, the first day of the week has been invariably perverted, from a day of joy and rejoicing, to one of gloom and superstition. It is in these countries, notwithstanding the great professions of concern for the physical nature of man, that nature has been most of all violated, by the denial of liberty of conscience to use the day of rest as would most promote health and happiness.

The address of the National Sabbath Convention contains these words: "A period of rest, after six days continued toil, is indispensable to the labourer; without this gracious interval his strength and vigour prematurely decay.

"Nor is this interval of repose, as a law of our physical nature, less necessary to intellectual occupations. The mind must be stately unladen of its cares, as the body of its burdens, or a similar penalty must be endured."

It has been already mentioned, that men in some employments, require to be relieved every eight hours; or to give it another division of time, to have

three Sabbaths of rest in a week. I have known many others, hard working men, when the labour was less severe, whose occupation required that they should attend to their respective duties twelve hours in the twenty-four, every day in the year. There was no decay of health and vigour, no exhausted energies, no prostration of body or of spirit, which this address pretends to say is the inevitable consequence of not keeping the Sabbath day. Not one single instance of the kind has ever come under my observation, during a period of many years. In regard to intellectual occupations on that day, which it is stated will result in "less clearness of perception, power of description, and soundness of judgment," I may mention, that some of the best works that have ever been written in this country, works which have received great commendation in foreign lands for their literary and scientific character, have been composed almost exclusively on Sundays, in the leisure thence afforded from constant employment of other days in the week. The views which I have given on this subject are believed to be the only true ones; and the sentiments of the Sabbatarians, differing from these as they do materially, are certainly incorrect both in principle and in practice.

Descent of property.

The national address to the people of the United

States uses this language: "However pure and healthful the fountain, if poison be cast into it, it sends forth only streams of death; and so will desecrated and polluted Sabbaths work our more speedy and dreadful ruin."

In the proceedings of the Harrisburg Convention we find the following sentence: "Property earned or increased by Sabbath desecration, reaches a second generation, accompanied by the impious parental lesson, that the claims of duty and human happiness may yield to the clamours of interest and convenience. Hence it is no wonder that such inheritances are soon squandered, so that the profligate and beggared son trudges in rags, where a Sabbath-breaking father rode in his chariot." I ask myself how is it possible that deliberate assemblies sanction such language. Is it true, that the laws of nature are inviolate to those who desecrate the Sabbath, as well as to those who do not? If it is so, the conclusions to be drawn from these paragraphs are false, and it is not too much to say, that the enlightened men of those congregations knew that they were so!

Where are the nobility of England, the acknowledged desecrators of the Sabbath day, with their property preserved to their families from one generation to another for a thousand years?

It may be said that their estates have been pro-

tected by particular laws, but what are human laws to that power that burns a barn or sinks a steam-boat, as a judgment upon Sabbath-breakers? Where is the Quaker property? instead of going down with this curse attached to it, it is preserved in a remarkable degree, from one generation to another.

But admitting that the parents had done wrong in working on the first day of the week, which I totally deny, who has delegated authority to these conventions to pass judgment upon their children, and to make them answerable for sins which they never committed.

Such sentiments, no matter how respectable the source whence they come, are degrading to human nature, and unworthy of enlightened assemblies.

The clergy.

The influence of the clergy is made so prominent a subject in Sabbath conventions, that it requires some notice. Addresses are reported and sustained, by which it might appear that the keys of both heaven and earth are given into their charge.

I touch upon the subject with regret, because I am liable to be misunderstood. There are many individuals among them, humble minded and devoted to the cause of truth, whose feelings I would not willingly wound; I would rather contribute to build them up than pull them down; but the system of paying men for preaching and praying, is

liable to great abuse. It is hardly possible in the nature of man, that a class of society should be receiving pay for their services, and not be influenced thereby. In the nature of things they will avoid such doctrines as are repugnant to those who give them bread.

Lord Brougham, in his speech on the Irish elective franchise bill, says, “Perjury ought certainly to be discountenanced, but *we* are not the persons to disfranchise for that offence, or we may disfranchise ourselves.” * * * “How will the reverend bishops of the other house be able to express their due abhorrence of such a crime, who solemnly declare in the presence of their God, that when they are called upon to accept a living, perhaps of £4000 a year, at that very instant, they are moved by the Holy Ghost to accept the office and administration thereof, and for no other reason whatever.”*

The first day of the week is the great harvest day of the clergy; hence so little reliance is to be placed upon any thing they say upon the subject. Where a deep pecuniary interest is at stake, evidence from the party concerned is not received in any court in the United States.

The good and excellent men among them, do not change the effects of the system. In the southern

* Morning Chronicle, April 27, 1825.

states, the established clergy uphold and justify slavery; in the north they condemn it. They are found in armies directly opposed to each other, asking blessings on each, and the inference is obvious, that many of them would take either side of the Sabbath question, as their interest might dictate. A large number of young men are annually to be provided for, and it is a natural consequence, that as the Sabbath supports them, they will support the Sabbath.

The clergy, from the time of the dark ages, (when churches and monasteries contained the learning of the world,) have had an influence to which they were never entitled. In the present day, as they cannot control literature, they have been found willing to pervert it, to serve their own purposes, and to uphold their power.* Hence in an inquiry for truth, great caution is to be observed in receiving statements emanating from them. This observation applies with peculiar force to their accounts of the morality and religion of Pagan nations. Their prejudices are so deep, and their interests so immediate, that it is scarcely possible their statements should be correct.

A little inquiry will convince us, that whether

* See speech of John Hare Powell in the senate of Pennsylvania. Also "Dangers from Presbyterianism," p. 14. Also New York Observer, Saturday, November, 1844.

in religion or literature, the clergy have always been behind the age; from them have emanated all the persecutions which have disgraced the name of religion; to them we may trace the opposition which has so often obscured for a time the light of science; and in many instances consigned its disciples—the benefactors of mankind—to imprisonment and a shameful death.

The spirit which persecuted Galileo, is not extinct in the present day; it has descended with the mantle of the priesthood, and its influence is felt in the opposition of the clergy to all attempts to enlarge the limits of human knowledge.

This alone is sufficient evidence that the religion of the clergy is not true religion—the latter is, in its nature, expansive and comprehensive. Emanating from perfect wisdom, it harmonizes with all that is true—every discovery in science affords additional proof of its doctrines. Religion has, in truth, all to hope, and the clergy have all to fear, from the expansion of knowledge. The pretensions of the one are founded in error and prejudice, while the other is based upon immutable and everlasting truth.

There is doubtless much learning among the clergy, but generally it is unfruitful and barren of any good result—it is oftener employed to gild ancient error, than to assist the candid enquirer.

Erasmus said, in his day "it was a matter of wit to be a Christian; that faith was rather in their papers than in their souls; that there were almost as many creeds as professors." What was true then, is true now. The strength of a man's understanding, the power of his voice and his eloquence, are made the proofs of his Christianity.

Persons who make books their study, and hope to obtain religion from them, are liable above all others to be led astray. We may learn from them the dogmas of different sects, and all the complicated affairs of church history; they are valuable, as containing the opinions of other men, and the records of former generations; but out of their proper place they may come to be curses rather than blessings; and this without regard to the excellence of the books themselves. The latent springs of human action each man has within him, whether they be good or bad. The fragrance of the rose is of no value to such as have not the power of smell: man must first have truth within him, to know what truth is: people who pretend to derive wisdom from books, must necessarily be behind the age; and without better dependence than books for religion, we can neither understand nor appreciate it. An implicit reliance on written religion debased the Puritans, and the same evil influence is felt in the present day.

“The heart
May give an useful lesson to the head,
And learning wiser grow without his books.
Knowledge and wisdom, far from being one,
Have oftentimes no connection. Knowledge dwells
In heads replete with thoughts of other men;
Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.

* * * * *

Knowledge is proud that he has learned so much;
Wisdom is humble that he knows no more.”

COWPER'S TASK.

Connected with the subject of the clergy, is the continued recommendation of the Sabbatarians to attend the churches. The different reports which I have read, bear to my mind conclusive internal evidence that they are written by clergymen. They arrogate to the clergy powers which they never had, and assume for the ministry an influence which it does not possess. This is the natural effect of making a trade of preaching.

The national address speaks of the “privileges of an attendance on the instructions of an intelligent Christian ministry.” I have no wish to destroy the churches; they harmonize, in a degree, with the state of society; but such a ministry, I conceive, is not to be found among the Sabbatarians. Calvinism, Episcopacy, Romanism, Puseyism, Unity and Trinity, sprinkling and baptizing, breaking the Sabbath, dogmas and rituals, often form the promi-

nent subjects of their discourses. If a person of sound intelligence was to hear some of these sermons, he might ask whether the principle of Christianity made any part of the doctrine of the preacher. Churches are only objectionable on account of the doctrines that are promulgated in them. Making the distinction between days, leads to the greater error arising from the distinction between what they call secular and religious things. They have one God for Sunday, and another for the other six days. If it was not that man returns day by day to his own bosom for the knowledge of right and wrong, sermons of this character would destroy by degrees every vestige of religion there is in the world. The very nature of their doctrines is often at variance with the great principles of human nature.

Neal, himself a clergyman, in his History of the Puritans, gives the following account of their ministry in the early days of the Sabbath excitement. "The Puritan (or parliament) clergy, were zealous Calvinists; and having been prohibited for some years from preaching against the Arminians, they now pointed all their artillery against them, insisting upon little else in their sermons but the doctrines of *predestination, justification by faith alone, salvation by free grace, and the inability of man to do that which is good.* The duties of

the *second table* were too much neglected; from a strong aversion to *Arminianism*, these divines unhappily made way for *Antinomianism*, verging from one extreme to another, till at length some of the weaker sort were lost in the wild mazes of enthusiastic dreams and visions; and others, from false principles, pretended to justify the hidden works of dishonesty.”

It may be supposed that the Sabbatarian ministry of the present day is better than this. A talented and distinguished Protestant clergyman of Philadelphia, gives the following account of it in the present year: “Congregations, instead of being taught from the pulpit to adorn their profession by all the lovely graces of the gospel, by kind and affectionate bearing in the world, by earnest and ever active endeavours to secure for themselves and others the blessings of peace, were annoyed with inflammatory harangues upon the ‘great schism,’ and upon the ‘abominations of the Roman church.’ The Pope, and the Pope, and the Pope, was the beginning and end of sermons in certain churches; and women and children were frightened with the details of him at Rome.”*

This ministry, which is so much recommended, breathes habitually intolerance and sectarianism;

* “Dangers from Presbyterianism,” p. 21.

it prays twice and thrice a day at Sabbath conventions; but it has been proved to have created riots and discord, and is in truth subversive of the morals of society.

Next, as to the arguments which are adduced in favour of closing canals, because courts and the public offices are closed on the first day of the week.

At the early period of the Christian religion, when that faith prevailed, all the secular power was in the hands of the Romans. Constantine, in the edict already referred to, and who first united church and state, interdicted the opening of courts on Sunday, which was afterwards confirmed by Theodosius, Valentinian and Arcadius, who published a law prohibiting arbitrations on holy days. In this prohibition, Sundays, their birth-days, and festival days, were all placed on the same footing. These edicts were still further enforced by Leo, 466, who gives as a reason, "that adversaries might meet together on that day without fear." The same law directed that the spectacle of wild beasts, the theatre, and other places of diversion, should be closed; and a distinction was made, for the first time, between birth-days and Sunday.*

Such were the imperial laws relative to closing

* See *Corpus Juris Civilis*, where these laws are extant. Article Ferii. Also Howell's Ecclesiastical History, folio, vol. III.

courts on the first day of the week. There were, no doubt, many special usages, in different countries, upon the subject; and they seem to have been regulated by the caprices of those who held the power. In the reign of Alfred, bishops were the judges, and several parts of the New Testament were incorporated into the Saxon laws.* The closing of the courts has become a law by long usage, enforcing particular statutes upon the subject, and the practice is universally assented to and approved. It has a basis in our physical nature, which would in itself be imperative. I apprehend there is no employment so severe for a conscientious magistrate, as setting as a judge in our supreme courts, where there is no appeal. The stretch of thought and research which is required in cases often extremely intricate; the mists that are thrown around by advocates, whose business it is to tell their own side of the story; the elaborate opinions that are often to be written out, make it one of the most onerous employments that is to be found. Instead of curtailing the relaxation of the judges, two days of rest in each week had better be appointed for them.

If there is no other reason why the courts should be closed, the usages of our forefathers, many cen-

* See Hume's Hist. Eng. reign of Alfred; also, Jefferson's Letter to Castier.

turies ago, should not be deemed authority for us, under circumstances entirely different. The first frame of laws in this province, made by William Penn, permitted all the civil affairs of government to be transacted on the first day of the week, "in cases of emergency;" and the legislature, and civil officers of this state, are at liberty to transact business on that day whenever it is required.

As respects the policy of closing canals and rail-roads on the first day of the week.

It seems to me that when statements are made, the whole truth should be told. If facts material to true judgment are left out, such statements are essentially false.

A statement was furnished to the Harrisburg Convention, and reiterated in Baltimore by a clergyman, and promulgated by both conventions, exhibiting the profit and loss on one section of the rail-roads of Pennsylvania. It pretends to show great loss in running the cars on the Allegheny Portage Rail-road on Sunday. If profit is the object, that rail-road may be made as profitable on that day as on any other, by taking off all restrictions, and using it as it is used on other days. Thus the loss is by observing the Sabbath, and not by desecrating it. But admitting that this is not done, and certainly no one proposes it, the statement is essentially false, because it does not tell the whole

truth; it argues as if the passengers came only from one extreme of the road to the other. They come from distant parts of the country, from Louisiana, Alabama, &c. in great numbers; they encounter all the uncertainties of the western waters; therefore it is not possible, under any circumstances, for them to make their journey in six days; and, independently of any considerations of profit, the public have a right to expect the whole communication to be kept open. It is a road more used by women and children than any other thoroughfare in this state. These are to be stopped twenty-four hours, often to great inconvenience and suffering—their boarding is to be paid by some one—to promote a sectarian object, that is opposed to the precepts of the New Testament.

A simple statement of the facts of the case would have been, that this road was part of a great line of communication, in which, for the transport of passengers alone, seven or eight boats were constantly engaged, twenty to thirty horses, and fifty to a hundred men; that stopping one link, broke the whole chain of communication, and would inevitably be attended with heavy loss. They might have added, that this road could be in no case a profitable concern by itself, and never would have been made but to sustain this connection. This would have

been the simple truth, but that has been sacrificed for a sectarian object.

If passing on the canals were prohibited, boatmen would probably be often found collected where the means of passing an idle day would be most agreeable to them. There could hardly be selected a measure of more demoralizing tendency. In a physical point of view, the rest is not necessary to the canal men; an easier work in general could hardly be selected. While the boats are loading and unloading the men work; at that time the horses are at rest. Besides this, they are stopped often by high water, they are stopped by low water; almost every month there are breaks somewhere on the canal, that detain them to a greater or less extent—often for days, sometimes for weeks together. They are detained by the necessary repairs of the canals—they are detained for repairing their boats—they are stopped four months in the year by frost, and yet, with all these embarrassments, these Sabbath sectarians want to take from the boatmen one seventh part of the residue of their time. It seems to me like a contest of the strong and the powerful against those who are not able to vindicate their own cause.

The boatmen have neither time nor money to devote to boatmen's conventions, or they might meet together with great propriety, and form asso-

ciations to endeavour to reform and soften the hearts of sectarians, who are so prone to condemn those who differ from them. They may be considered, on the broad scale, to be better men than sectarians; and their statements would be more to be relied upon than the publications of the Sabbath conventions. If there are boatmen who are desirous of stopping their boats on the Sunday, no one objects—no voice is raised against it. Why should not perfect liberty of conscience be extended to all? Those who travel on that day have the example of Jesus Christ and the doctrines of the New Testament in their favour; but I have never heard an objection to persons staying at home on that day, if they preferred not to travel.

Turnpike roads are established by the same power and for the same purpose as canals; but society would never suffer them to be subjected to sectarian influence—there is this difference, the turnpikes are used by thousands of individuals, while only a few boatmen pass on the canals, who are not so well able to tell their own story and vindicate their cause.

The Harrisburg Convention says: "Of fifty lock-tenders on the Pennsylvania canal, between Columbia and the Allegheny mountains, forty-four do not open their locks to the freight boats." The Report omits to state, that if the keepers are not in

attendance, the boatmen open the locks themselves. It seems to be purposely framed so as to admit of an inference which is not correct, and is in fact a false statement made under colour of the truth.

It is intimated that this has been effected by the Sabbath missionaries. Can it be possible there is a class of men among us, who ask lock-keepers to violate their contracts, and induce them to set at nought the laws of the commonwealth, which expressly authorize travelling on Sunday, and then boast of such achievements as a triumph?

The convention also refers, with apparent exultation, to the fact, that the Philadelphia and Reading rail-road is to be stopped on the first day of the week. That road was made for the transportation of coal, and as the success of the road is a question of speed, the company would probably be the gainer by stopping every passenger car.

The present stoppage is the result of the individual views of the postmaster-general. He informed the directors it was not his wish that the mail should be carried on Sunday, and the passenger train not being profitable without it, it has been discontinued on that day. It is understood that the board of directors had no objection to the Sunday cars. Here is an officer of the government violating the trust the country has reposed in him, and acting in direct opposition to the declared will

of the congress of the United States, (as manifested in the Sunday mail report,) to accomplish a sectarian object, which I repeat is adverse to the principles of the Christian religion.

It is not on this route alone that this usurpation of power has taken place; in other places, where the stage travels regularly on that day, they are not allowed to take in the mail bags. It has been attended with loss and inconvenience, and has given general dissatisfaction. No matter who is in power, or who is not, every true hearted man ought to object to such things.

There are other statements made by these conventions, which it is not needful strictly to examine; they allude to having documents to sustain their positions. My impression is, that these have been prepared by men of so much prejudice, that they are not entitled to the smallest credit.

The national address says, with some exultation, "It is not he who fears God, and keeps his Sabbath, that robs his neighbour, or murders him." * * * Every body knows that. "Nor is his place among the debased of his species in any respect, or anywhere. * * * * He will understand and value his political rights, and respect the rights of others. * * * * * The world has never witnessed the spectacle of an universal obedience to the Sabbath

in any country, and its full power to bless a nation is yet unrevealed."

Were those who issued this address so blind, or so ignorant, or so prejudiced, as not to know that every statement herein is untrue. The Sabbatarians at one time wielded the power of the British parliament; they enforced the observance of the day by every law that ingenuity could devise; they came to this country with both the civil and ecclesiastical power in their hands. Every individual in the colony was of the class of Sabbatarians. Is there no truth in the histories that have been alluded to? Were the Quakers and the witches not hung? Who was it exercised such dreadful cruelties upon the defenceless aborigines of the country? Who was it made such despotic laws against the Roman Catholics, that it was death for a Catholic priest to remain in their territories? If history is true, the answer to all these questions will be, that it was the Sabbatarians. Who had such bitter quarrels and denunciations among themselves, that when they had only been settled a few years in the country, Vane, one of the most pious among these Puritans, left the country in disgust? In the contest, Cotton, and Winthrop, and Hutchinson, were prominent actors. The answer still is, it was the Sabbatarians. And it is the Sabbatarians that at the

present day are issuing denunciations against some of the most respectable men in the country.

In one of the leading addresses of the convention, it is said, "no one can rebel against the Sabbath as a religious institution, without the most heaven-daring sin;" and another work, speaking of the Sabbath-breakers, says, "judgment in due time lingereth not, and damnation slumbereth not."* Such sentiments, in my opinion, can only be sustained by falsehood. In every aspect they are equally untrue. I have observed the management of extensive operations, where large numbers of people were employed; I have worked on the first day of the week whenever it has suited me to do so; I have employed others to do the same; I have travelled and visited on that day; I have done everything that I would do on any other day of the week. I have seen, times without number, children enjoying the innocent amusements of their kites and their marbles, and I have never seen the slightest loss or harm resulting from it, in any way whatever. So far as I have acted myself, I have done it with great peace and tranquillity of mind; nay, to use a Scripture expression, if I had observed one day as more holy than the rest, the stones in the street would have cried out against me. I shall

* Boston Permanent Documents.

show hereafter, that the laws sustain me in such a course.

I here close my remarks upon Sabbath conventions: what I have said, has been in no unkind spirit: some among the members are my personal friends, and no one can deny, that the assemblies in question, have contained much individual virtue, respectability and intelligence. Against their proceedings, however, I have felt called upon to protest, as a Christian and as a citizen. The fictions which they have brought forward, are so monstrous, as to disgust any candid enquirer after truth; the end which they propose to gain, is subversive alike of religion and good government; they would destroy liberty of conscience, to gain which, the world has seen so much suffering; they would retard the progress of science and the arts, which can never flourish, when the mind is enslaved; they would establish a religion of rites and ceremonies, in place of the pure and simple doctrines of the Christian faith; they would recall, in effect, the formal spirit of Paganism, to preside at the altars of a spiritual church; they would debase religion to glorify themselves: to gain such ends, they now invoke the aid of public opinion and the power of the civil government; should they succeed, they would establish a persecution, as oppressive in its nature, as any that deforms the pages of history.

There is a general impression that the governments of these states are civil compacts, having nothing to do with ecclesiastical affairs. It is so of the United States, but not of the individual states; they all interfere more or less with these things, and incorporate religious creeds into what ought to be civil codes only. They protect all; but there are disabilities of one kind or other; in some, it extends to Jews, in others to Roman Catholics, sometimes to both. In more than one state the clergy are not eligible to seats in the legislature. In every case these are defects; there is no reason that the clergy should be condemned beforehand as unfit for such offices; and the more they are considered a distinct class of society, the greater is the priesthood.

The constitution of Pennsylvania expressly says, "That all men have a natural and indefeasible right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their own consciences; that no man can of right be compelled to attend, erect, or support any place of worship, or to maintain any ministry against his consent; that no human authority can, in any case whatever, control or interfere with the rights of conscience."

This is plain and express, and it is meant to cover the whole ground, giving liberty of conscience to all; leaving it, as a matter of course, to the courts

to interfere, under the great principles of the common law, whenever, under the pretence of liberty of conscience, the rights of others are invaded.

This supreme law of the state of Pennsylvania, absolutely nullifies and does away every statute that interferes with the right of conscience. The courts have no power to interfere to judge of conscience; one man may choose to eat pork, and another not; one to travel and another to remain at home; one to work and another to be idle. So long as none abridge the civil rights of their fellow men, the courts have no power over them. This I believe is not only the letter, but the spirit of the constitution of this state. It is almost verbatim of the rights guaranteed by Penn, heretofore alluded to. And yet liberty of conscience has been abridged by several laws for the observance of the first day of the week. One innovation has begotten another, and instead of a purely civil code, protecting all equally, and leaving ecclesiastical affairs in the hands of sects and individuals, we have established, by our enactments, a partial union of church and state.

The first law of this nature was passed in 1705. It is called "an act to restrain people from labour on the first day of the week." It left open all kind of diversions, as had been done before by the laws of England. On the same day, another act

was passed, called “a law concerning liberty of conscience.” This latter law seems undoubtedly to have been meant to protect all conscientious persons who chose to work on that day. It says that “no person now, nor at any time hereafter, dwelling or residing within this province, who shall profess faith in God the Father and in Jesus Christ, &c., shall in any case be molested or prejudiced for his or her conscientious persuasion—but shall freely and fully enjoy his or her Christian liberty in all respects, without molestation or interruption.”*

This view is sustained by the knowledge that both of these laws were supported by Quaker influence; it is well known, that that sect had a decided objection to a superstitious regard of the day. Many of them took in their harvest and worked in their fields as it suited them. It was, in fact, but renewing the principles which had been proclaimed by Penn, heretofore referred to, and these form the basis of that part of the constitution of the state which I have copied.

After such repeated declarations, it ought to be considered a settled law of the land, that conscientious men are at liberty to work on the first day of the week, if they choose to do so. I think there can be no doubt that such is the law of this state,

* See folio laws, 1714, p. 32.

and that it would be so interpreted by enlightened and disinterested men. What would be the result, in a court with prejudiced feelings, it is impossible to say. The case seems never to have been brought fairly into view. There is one report of a Jew, who was complained of for having worked on Sunday; but it seems as if he had pleaded his religious persuasion, rather than individual, conscientious feelings, and the court decided against him. The law in question did not apply to him, because a Jew is not supposed to have faith in Jesus Christ; but the constitution is broad enough to cover the case, if it had been purely one of conscientious feeling. If it was such, of which I know nothing, the court ought to have sustained him; otherwise it would be an usurpation of legislative power by the court. The introduction of religion into the common law, was an usurpation of this kind, and is said to have been founded upon the “base falsehoods” of the law judges in England.* This has been perpetuated in this country, and will continue to be the case, so long as people want confidence in the power of truth.†

* See Jefferson's letter to Major Cartwright. Jefferson's Correspondence, vol. IV. p. 393.

† The president of the college at Columbia, South Carolina, in a letter to a member of congress, says, “this usurpation has been so completely put down by Jefferson, that it never can be

There could hardly be a greater stigma cast upon the Christian religion, than the idea that it is not able to sustain itself without the power of the sword.

A very curious trial occurred a few years since in Pennsylvania. A man came before the court with his hat on. The Quakers, as a class, objected to the formal recognition of respect, where they felt none; and, preferring to show it by their conduct rather than by unmeaning forms, they steadily refused to pull off their hats in reverence to any court or body of men. This was so well settled, that if the man had been a Quaker, there would have been no question upon the subject; he was not a Quaker, but still he chose to keep his hat on, and the court ordered it to be taken off. For this offence, the judge was impeached before the senate of the state, the impeachment was sustained, and he lost his office for this, and for this alone. The man pleaded that he had done no civil injury to any one—that the constitution gave him a right to

repeated except for purposes of fraud." And he asks, in reference to the case, ("Smith and Sparrow, 4 Bingh, 84. 88,") "did Judge Story never read the Year Book cited by Mr. Jefferson, which shows the barefaced, wilful ignorance of the English bench? The Judge either has read Prisot's opinion, or he has not. If not, he is grossly ignorant; if he has, he has asserted what he *knows* is not law."

take his hat off or keep it on—and the high court of appeals sustained him in it.

This may appear as a very small affair, but the senate was right. Courts have no right to usurp legislative powers, and if truth prevails, conscientious men will be sustained in doing any work on the first day that their feelings may render proper.

So stood the laws of Pennsylvania relative to the first day, until the year 1794, when another law was passed, renewing the interdiction of labour, but not touching the provisions relative to the right of conscience; it allowed travelling, and was almost a copy of the previous law, except that it prohibited diversions, and it may be considered in itself a proof, that the legislature on that subject, had become more ceremonial and superstitious.

With a settled conscientious persuasion, that every day should be alike holy, I have performed any work which suited me on the first day of the week, and I have considered that the laws of Pennsylvania protected me, and would protect others in so doing.

At almost every session of our legislature, petitions are presented for further enactments relative to the first day of the week; they are referred to committees, and uniformly rejected. Still, while men's minds are prejudiced, there is no certain security for liberty of conscience. The constitu-

tion may remain as it is; but laws are but cobwebs to a sectarian community.

Courts, that are to explain them, partake of the influence, and the people sustain them in it. At present, the most certain reliance for the preservation of liberty of conscience in this country, is in the antagonist principles of the different sects. It might seem to be a sad thing that caused religious sects to quarrel as they do, but thence arises safety to honest and enlightened men. Let them combine upon the subject of Sunday police, or upon any other point whatever, and the liberties of the country are in danger.

Those who are disposed to multiply penal enactments, seem not to understand their nature. Severities against doctrines, have so much augmented the evil, that persecutions have been called the seed of the church. And it is probable that penal laws have often increased rather than lessened crime. In the reign of Henry VIII., there were hanged in England seventy-two thousand thieves and rogues, besides other malefactors, being about two thousand a year.* Executions have been gradually decreasing, until they have become of rare occurrence. Laws have been softened, and the morals of the people have improved; it is probable that

* See Hume's History of England, vol. V. note, (MM.) p. 533.

this improvement is to be ascribed in no inconsiderable degree, to the public being rendered less familiar with crime, through the amenity of the civil code.

Jefferson, in his Notes on Virginia, makes it a question, whether no law at all, or too much law, is the greater evil. He pronounces the latter to be the case; he finds his opinion on the Indian nations on one side, (amongst whom, he says, governed as they are by the moral sense of right and wrong, crimes are of very rare occurrence,) and the civilized nations of Europe on the other.*

Ordinances are of no avail unless supported by public opinion. The laws of Pennsylvania, so far as respects the abstaining from labour on the first day of the week, are effectual. Society universally assents to them; but of what avail are the provisions respecting tippling on Sunday. Constables are required to search public houses, and other authority is given to them, but it avails so little, that it is supposed there is double the amount of licentiousness on that as on any other day. And if we multiply the statutes upon this subject, it is more likely to increase than to decrease crime.

Our canals and rail-roads are used by persons who believe they are enjoined to keep the seventh

* Jefferson's Notes, p. 138.

day of the week as a Sabbath, and by others who are conscientious in keeping every day as a day of holiness. These persons are all taxed to support them, and they can never be placed on a footing with other men, if their conscientious rights are not equally attended to.

Our canals have been designed for public highways, under regulations necessary for their preservation, and the legislature has no more right to put any other restrictions upon them, than it has to interfere with our state or turnpike roads. Travelling on the first of the week is expressly permitted by the laws of the state, and I am not aware of any difference in principle between travelling by water and by land. Sunday has been considered a lucky day for seamen to leave port, and raftsmen travel on the river by hundreds when the water suits them. I believe no idea was ever expressed that this was wrong. Why then should not the farmer take in his grain with equal propriety? The grain is ripe in the fields but a few days in the year. The raftsmen who depends upon accidental freshets is equally limited as to time; they stand upon the same footing. The law makes a distinction, which has no foundation in reason or common sense. There are usually more days suitable for the raftsmen than for the husbandman to take in his grain.

The edict of Constantine, and the old English

laws, heretofore referred to, allowed all kinds of work in the harvest field.

If our government is, as is pretended, a civil compact, the propriety of any laws of this character may be questioned; they are, in fact, an incongruous mixture of church and state, warranted in some degree by old usages, but inconsistent with the nature of our institutions. They have one origin, a want of reliance on the power of truth. Having full and entire confidence in the influence of religion on the human mind—in its universality—in its sufficiency to sustain itself without the aid of the civil power, I should fear no evil from abolishing every law upon the subject, and leaving such things to the discipline of particular sects.

The Sabbatarians would object to such a course, because they imagine that religion depends upon the observance of one day as the Sabbath. Not many years since, it was thought needful that religion should be supported by the power of the state. The opinion has prevailed still more generally that an established clergy is necessary. Experience has demonstrated that these ideas are unfounded, and that such institutions are not required.

The toleration act in England, was only obtained after a desperate struggle with the power of the clergy; and yet that act was fraught with unnumbered blessings, and enlarged, in every direction, the

sphere of the human mind. At a later day, the corporation and test acts fell before the same liberal spirit, and in despite of the same opposition; in our own country, established church governments in Virginia and in New England, have been successively overthrown after every effort on the part of the clergy to sustain them.

While we have to lament the continued existence of so much bigotry and intolerance, it is pleasing to record these examples of progress. The day is not, we may hope, far distant, when all men will acknowledge the insufficiency of form and ceremony to illustrate a spiritual religion.

Sabbath conventions will then assume their place in history with other sectarian movements, which have attempted to repress the spirit of enquiry, and which, after brief success, have become a mockery and a warning to succeeding generations.

Enactments on this subject are but a species of sectarianism upon a broader scale, the evils of which have been shown in many ways in this country.

A few years since, in the neighbourhood of Boston, a Catholic seminary was burnt to the ground by a combination of zealous Protestants. The same thing has occurred in Philadelphia during the present season. Catholic seminaries have been destroyed, and the community was so corrupted by sectarian influence, as to be unwilling to arrest the

flames. The attempt is now making to create another kind of sectarianism, not less intolerant, by casting odium upon those who observe the first day of the week after the manner of the early Christians.

The present constitution of Pennsylvania, ministers, in a slight degree, to this sectarianism. It provides on this subject, "That no person who acknowledges the being of a God, and a future state of rewards and punishments, shall, on account of his religious sentiments, be disqualified to hold any office or place of trust or profit under this commonwealth." From this we are of course to infer, that persons who do *not* believe in a God, and a future state of rewards and punishments, are incompetent to hold office.

This is, in fact, so far as it goes, a test act; it is wrong in principle, because a civil code has properly no concern with religion. Any interference by the civil power with the conscience, is generally of no avail—if effectual, it is tyranny. The interest both of religion and of good government is advanced by keeping them wholly distinct. They have separate provinces for their action—distinct duties to perform—and they are never combined without decreasing the efficacy of both. All history bears witness to the evils arising from a union, in any form, of church and state. The

bitterest contentions, the worst persecutions, the most intense demoralization, which the world has ever witnessed, have arisen from this cause. We may fairly conclude, that in whatever degree it may be accomplished in this country, religion will become corrupt, and the seeds of contention and tyranny be infused into our government.

Some of the other states of the Union are, at present, much more intolerant than Pennsylvania. Here, though the principle is false, the practical operation of the restriction, referred to above, is of little account. It can scarcely be called exclusive, because it is almost impossible that any one should come within its limits.

There never was a nation found, where the people had not a belief in God, and in a future state of rewards and punishments. The Egyptians first built altars and temples to religion; but before their erection, there is evidence of the universal belief in God among those who were called Pagans, and connected with it, a belief in future retribution.

There is no such thing as entire irreligion. Truth is as needful to our preservation, as blood to the physical frame; the whole fabric of society rests upon it. Every individual is, to a certain extent, a religious man; but what is called religion, has been so long prostituted to the worst purposes, and is so much connected with childish forms, that

many excellent men turn from the name instinctively. That man is not to be found, who has no respect for truth and virtue; and he who recognises the attributes of God, believes in God, without regard to the name he bears.

There is but one religion in the world. The word comes from *reliquo*, *to bind anew*. There is no false religion; this, in its nature, is impossible. We are familiar with Catholicism, Episcopacy, and many minor sects; they are merely forms of church government, which have no necessary connection with religion. *They* rise and fall, but religion remains unchanged.

I have before quoted Mosheim for the opinion, that many of the ceremonies of the present Christian churches, have originated in the forms of Pagan worship. The Sabbath, as at present understood, has been derived, in like manner, from the Jews. All such forms are equally inconsistent with the simplicity of vital truth.

Justin Martyr, that eminent Christian father of whom I have spoken, says, "All who lived according to reason were Christians, even though they were reputed to be Atheists; for instance, Socrates, Heraclitus, and others among the Greeks; Abraham, Ananias, Azarias, Misael, Elias, among the barbarians." (Jews being so considered by the Greeks and Romans.) Whilst on the other hand,

they who lived contrary to reason, were bad men, and enemies of Christ; that “whatever right opinions the Gentile philosophers entertained respecting the nature of the Deity, the relation in which man stands to him, and the duties arising out of that relation, were to be ascribed to the reason (*logos*) implanted in their own bosoms.”*

This is consistent with the doctrines of the New Testament—“He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; * * * * * but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is *that* of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.” These views are sustained by every sound principle of philosophy and common sense, and they introduce us into universal sympathy and brotherhood with the whole family of man.

The Esquimaux in the frozen regions of the north, and the Hottentot basking under the palm tree, beneath a vertical sun, so far as they are actuated by this *logos*, or, as Adam Smith calls it, “the man within the breast,” are as effectually saved from their sins, as Christians can be. The institution of a Sabbath has never come to them; but they understand the great moral principles of right and

* “Some account of the writings and opinions of Justin Martyr, by John, Bishop of Lincoln.”

wrong as perfectly as we do. Lord Edward Fitzgerald, after travelling thousands of miles amongst nations which we deem barbarous, left behind him this sentiment: "I have seen human nature in almost all its forms; it is everywhere the same, but the wilder it is, the more virtuous." See Fitzgerald's Letters.

Plutarch, the great pagan philosopher and historian, in his work against Coloteus, says: "Examine the face of the globe, and you may find cities unfortified, unlettered, without a regular magistrate, or appropriated habitations; without possessions, property, or the use of money, and unskilled in all the magnificent and polite arts of life. But a city, without the knowledge of a God, no man can or ever will find."

Some of the doctrines of the ancient Platonists and Stoics, appear to have been as pure as those of the Christian period. If all men, so far as they are actuated by the pure principles of religion, are Christians according to Justin Martyr and the New Testament, (and we must believe this, unless we believe in two religions, or that they are cut off from salvation altogether,) it will follow that "the dispensations of the law and of the gospel," are to be referred rather to individual minds, than to any particular period of time; and that the opinions of Jews and Pagans concerning religion, may as essen-

tially exist with us, as they did before the coming of Christ. Mosheim relates, as has been mentioned before, that many of the ceremonies of Pagan worship were incorporated as symbols into the Christian church, to captivate the vulgar. They seem to exist almost in their pristine vigour in the present day; it must be evident to all, that image worship may be performed without the presence of idols. It will also follow, that those who rely upon written ordinances for religion, are in the dispensation of the law, though they may bear the name of Christ. Jesus left no writings behind him as a rule for others—he directed none to do so; but, in the most beautiful and touching language, he inculcated everywhere the practice of virtue and truth. Those who are not satisfied with this, will naturally inculcate the necessity of Sabbath days, and in this respect may be considered rather as Jews than Christians.

To the Jews, the Sabbath was a festival and not a fast. I have adverted to Jesus dining with one of the chief Pharisees. The Jewish laws, as has been stated, were extremely severe respecting labour on that day; “no fire was to be kindled;” &c.; it appears to have been held by them purely as a day of relaxation, and not of austerities. Milman, in his history of the Jews, says, “Rich and poor, young and old, master and slave, met before the gate of

the city, and indulged in innocent mirth, or in the pleasures of friendly intercourse, on the Sabbath day.” The first day, as has been stated above, was a festival amongst the early Christians; it was a festival during every period of the church history, until the time of the Puritans, and it is much to be regretted, that our laws upon this subject, should have been founded upon the fancies of a handful of distempered men.

All these laws should be relaxed and finally erased from the statute book. Christmas, as it is observed in Pennsylvania, presents an instance of a festival day, preserved from generation to generation by public opinion. The public offices, markets, and other places of the kind, are closed. People who are conscientiously scrupulous against observing the day, open their stores and work as it suits them; no one is offended thereat; entire liberty of conscience is enjoyed. Many of the churches are opened and well attended; none are made offenders; and the cause of vital religion, in my opinion, would be increased by putting the first day of the week upon the same footing.

One object of this treatise, has been to vindicate the true character of the Sabbath, and to defend it from desecration by sectarian influence; to ascribe to days a peculiar holiness, is the artifice of priesthood; to enforce their observance by the civil

power, is an infringement upon liberty of conscience, unworthy of the spirit of our laws; the doctrines promulgated by the clergy, do, in fact, debase the Sabbath; their effect is, by enjoining a formal strictness, for which there is no authority, to drive men into the opposite extreme; a part of the licentiousness which distinguishes the first day of the week, must, I do not doubt, be ascribed to the intolerance of those who profess to be ministers of the Christian religion. In truth, one chief objection to the day as now instituted, is the special sanctity which the Sabbatarian attributes to it; as a day of rest and relaxation—as a period for visiting and social enjoyment—as an opportunity for repose, from the strifes and cares of business, few would object to it.

If it seems best to some persons to employ the day in religious exercises, it is proper and right they should do so; but those who consider the nature of religion—that it is purely spiritual—will feel, that the attempt to make one day holy and to fill churches by civil enactments, (for it amounts to that,) is worse than useless; persons who advocate such measures, forget there is no such thing as a religion of force; in fact, just so far as it is based upon force, its effect is, to add hypocrisy to a want of faith; my candid conviction is, that churches would be as well attended, and attended to better purpose,

if every law on the subject was repealed, and the pretensions of particular days to exclusive sanctity, disclaimed forever.

If the views presented in the foregoing pages are correct, it follows, that there should be entire liberty of conscience, with respect to the first day of the week; men have the privilege of attending church if it suits them; but they have no right to denounce others, whose views happen to differ from their own; it should be purely a matter of conscience with each individual; upon one person, the obligation to labour on that day, may be as binding as it is upon another to go to church; because one man rests, it does not follow that all must rest. The nurse in the sick room must work as on other days; and the conductor of a steam engine, in promoting the health and happiness of a community, may be as wisely and as religiously employed, as those who wait around the couch of the invalid.

In the sixteenth century it was said, that the recreations which were allowed in the afternoon, made the people more attentive to their churches in the morning, and promoted harmony and good feeling. It seems to me, that all the rail-roads leading from our large cities, should be furnished with increased facilities on the first day of the week, that the sedentary man and the mechanic who are shut up during six days, should on the seventh have an

opportunity for that recreation, which the God of nature has allotted to them. They should be encouraged to take their families into the country, and thus our rail-roads might be made sources of great luxury and enjoyment; religion would be increased, morality promoted, and it would be eminently beneficial to the physical nature of man, which is made so prominent a subject of consideration in the Sabbath conventions. Directors of rail-roads would then have the satisfaction of knowing, that they had done all in their power to restore the day to the purposes to which it appears to have been devoted by the early Christians.

The employment of chaplains by our national and state legislatures, may be considered to be at variance with the spirit of our institutions. As yet, such appointments have been successfully resisted in Pennsylvania. The constitution of the United States says, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Here is another broad ground taken in favour of conscientious liberty; but this, so just and equitable to all, has given great offence to the Presbyterians, who are now deemed the principal Sabbatarians. In a general synod, held at Pittsburg in the year 1834, they pretended to establish, not only the immorality of the constitution, as they termed

it, but that "it contained the infidel and anti-christian principle, that congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion, or prohibiting the *free exercise thereof*."^{*} Every movement they make upon this subject, evinces that the intolerance which marked the rise of the society, is still rife in the present day.

John Adams, the elder, the great expounder of constitutional law in this country, when President of the United States, wrote to the Dey of Algiers, that "the constitution of the United States was in no sense founded upon the Christian religion." Leaving religion, of course, where it always ought to be left, to individual minds, and knowing no distinction among those who led a peaceable and quiet life.

The present envoy extraordinary to the court of

* I have wished to avoid any particular reference to sects. But in a work called "Pope and Presbyterians," written, as it is said, by one of the same class as the members of this synod, Presbyterianism is acknowledged to be identified with the Sabbath. The author calls it "The sheet-anchor of national honour and prosperity." I do not understand how he can claim for his sect the wish to establish liberty of conscience, or how he can say that "with united voice they will join in condemning all invasion of the supremacy of the law." Who is there among them that will have the independence to condemn the interference of the missionaries with the lock-keepers referred to in these pages? Or to refute the incorrect statements made by Sabbath conventions?

China, writes as follows: "Dr. Bridgeman is chaplain to the legation in title and fact. I have deemed it essential to have religious services performed at the residence of the legation every Lord's day, and shall adhere to the practice as long as my mission lasts." I presume this is the first time that such an affair was ever got up officially by any of the representatives of the United States in a foreign country.

The appropriation of money by congress for such a purpose, is an innovation upon former practices, and may be considered an infringement of the constitution of the United States. If John Adams' opinion is correct, it might be well, before agents and officers are selected to fill important stations in government, that they should learn that the constitution is a civil contract, having no relation to religious rites. The Presbyterian synods may lament as they please over such a state of things, but "it is error alone that needs the support of government, truth can stand by itself."*

Every law of a religious or sectarian character, is so far a union of church and state; and however plausible may be the pretext, religion is an affair in which the legislature has no right to meddle, and such a course is always injurious, and a violation of the constitution.

* Jefferson's Notes on Virginia.

It may be received as an axiom in government, that a legislature has no right to expend money for any purpose, for which it has no right to lay a tax; and if it is admitted, that the legislature of Pennsylvania cannot tax the people for ecclesiastical purposes, it will follow that it has no right to expend money to pay chaplains. In the government of the United States, long usage, prior to the constitution, has sanctioned the thing as regards congress, though the whole basis of the constitution is opposed to the principle. In Pennsylvania and some other states, there has been no such practice, and the appointment of a chaplain here would be a violation of the spirit of our laws. An usurpation of this kind was carried into effect in New York some years since, and created great dissatisfaction. There was no apology for it either in the laws or customs of the state. To make it the more acceptable, the law stated, that the clergy of Albany, "without discrimination or preference," should be appointed to the office of chaplain. It altered in no respect the principle, but it led to this dilemma, that a coloured orthodox clergyman claimed his equal right to pray and to be paid. White clergymen were willing to pray for the blacks, but for blacks to pray for the whites was an unheard of thing, which could, under no circumstances, be submitted to. It became a subject of negotiation,

which resulted in a compromise, by which the black pastor was paid from the public purse, *not* for saying prayers for the legislature, as other chaplains did, but for *not* saying them.*

These public prayers, so expressly forbidden by the New Testament, seem to me equally objectionable in principle and in detail. I know of no point of view in which they can be defended, but as a source of emolument to the clergy. Like many similar rites, they have probably had their remote origin in the lustrations of pagan worship, which were only partially interdicted by Constantine.

The executive of Pennsylvania, under the administration of Governor Wolfe, after some decided repugnance, as the paper expressed, issued a proclamation for a fast, at the time the cholera prevailed in this country. There can be no doubt that it was a violation of the constitution of the state. It was neither sanctioned by law nor by usage. We heard no more of anything of the kind, until the year 1843, when a proclamation was issued by the then executive, appointing a day of thanksgiving. This is obnoxious to the same remarks. It was no doubt done to please misguided men. So far as it went, it was a union of church and state, unwarranted by the constitution, irreligious in its nature,

* Report 1832 of Assembly of New York, No. 298.

and immoral in its tendencies. Can it be believed, by any intelligent man, that people can give thanks because a day has been appointed for the purpose, and the hour has come? People are thankful when they have pure and thankful hearts—it is a feeling that flows spontaneously from the exuberance of their own sensations. The law may make men hypocrites, but it can never make them religious.

I have before stated, that, in the austerities of the Puritans relative to the first day, another day of recreation was appointed by act of parliament. Their zeal against Christmas, and other holidays, resulted in festival days of their own; not only days for public thanksgiving, but fast days were agreed upon by the Presbyterian assembly of divines, held at Westminster in 1645; and directions were also given how they should be held, how long they should continue, and the particular preparation of mind necessary thereto. This is believed to be the origin of the thanksgiving days of the eastern states, but they have no application to us, so long as we are at liberty to observe Christmas as we choose.

These pages have been prepared without favour or affection towards any class of men, and amid engagements which have prevented a more elaborate view of the subject; but, so far as I have gone, I have endeavoured simply to state the truth. I have

examined several different translations of the Scriptures, both from the Hebrew and the Septuagint, with notes and annotations more extensive than the text; have traced, as far as my leisure would permit, various ecclesiastical histories, some of them voluminous and of ancient date; have paid considerable attention to the writings of the earliest authors in the Christian era, and to rare works, old and of difficult access, which treat upon this subject; I have read with care many of the publications of sectarians to sustain the institution; I have omitted nothing within my reach, and I have not found one shred of argument, or authority of any kind, that may not be deemed of a partial and sectarian character, to support the institution of the first day of the week as a day of peculiar holiness. But, in the place of argument, I have found opinions without number—volumes filled with idle words that have no truth in them. In the want of texts of Scripture, I have found perversions; in the want of truth, false statements. I have seen it mentioned, that Justin Martyr, in his *Apology*, speaks of Sunday as a holy day; that Eusebius, bishop of Cesarea, who lived in the fourth century, establishes the fact of the transfer of the seventh to the first day by Christ himself. These things are not true—these authors say no such thing. But there are none to contradict—the volumes are not at hand, and they pass for

truth. I have seen other early authors referred to, as establishing the same point, but they are equally false—there is no such thing to be found in them. On the contrary, evidence has accumulated upon me as I have pursued the investigation, showing exactly the reverse. These statements are likely to be contradicted—they are contradicted every day, and that mostly by men who ought to know better, but who have a great stake at issue in maintaining the peculiar holiness of the first day of the week; but they are true, however much men may deny them.

Having thus endeavoured to follow the Sabbatharians through some of their devious wanderings, I come finally to consider the objection to their argument, which arises from the entire accountability of man.

This is a doctrine worth all the rest; books may perish, but this will endure forever. It is not limited to one age or sect, but applies to every individual in the world; as people attend to it, they understand the internal nature of truth, that it depends not upon the ingenuity of man—upon no books, however excellent they may be—upon no rules, which the most refined sects may establish.

This doctrine has been taught by all the sages of ancient and modern times; it is taught in our books, in our schools, and in our meeting-houses; above all, it is the teaching of our own bosoms. If, then, it

is true, it leaves no room for one day or time to be more holy than another. We are born for active exertions; without them, we should perish; and we perform our duty to God as well when we take care of our physical frames, as when we perfect our moral character. There is no true ground for the distinction between secular and religious affairs. Every action of our lives is a moral action; everything involves religion.

There is a principle of harmony throughout the universe.

In physical affairs, it may be traced from the order that marks the solar system, to the minutest insect that crawls on the ground. In all the operations of men, there is a striving after harmony, an effort after perfection. The child who makes his tiny coach, and the artificer of the splendid steam ship, are actuated by the same principle: it is this harmony, applied to mind, which forms the perfection of the human character; so far as it prevails, every man is a religious man, and every act of his life is an act of worship.

Everything that we do has relation to this great harmony of the world. We cannot fail to perceive that the greatest events hang upon the most trivial causes.

Shall these causes, on which so much depends, be considered of no account? or who shall draw

the line of distinction? it cannot be done, it does not exist. But we can cut the knot we cannot untie; make every day a day of religion, and feel that we are accountable for every action of our lives. So far as man does this, he comes into the universal harmony of truth. Let me not be told that these principles are adapted only to men of refinement; it is not so; they are applicable to all. All feel them according to their capacity, though they may never have thought of giving language to their sensations.

Feelings of this character, put an end at once to the distinction of sects and days; they embrace all the religion which exists in the world. The means which would be most likely to produce that reformation so much needed in society, would be to impress man with the idea that he is just as accountable one day as another; that the sanctuary of the Most High is ever open in his own bosom; that every place is God's temple, and that his altar should be erected in man's own heart.

A P P E N D I X.

Extract from BISHOP WHITE's Lectures on the Catechism.

The blessing of the seventh day is mentioned in the twelfth chapter of Genesis, at the closing of the act of creation; but this is thought by some to have been done without any intimation of an appointment in Paradise, and only to account for its being made to the children of Israel in the wilderness. *Certain it is*, that we meet with no instance of an actual hallowing of the Sabbath, until we reach the 16th chapter of Exodus: and the manner of the giving and the receiving of the institution, carries strong appearances of its not being familiar to the Israelites. This seems not easily to be accounted for, if it had been observed by their patriarchal forefathers, of which also, there is *not a hint in their history.* * * *

In regard to its duration, it appears evident, that so far as regarded the authority of the injunction to the Israelites, and unless some new obligation can be shown, the institution ceased, even in relation to Jewish converts to Christianity, at the destruction of their religious polity, and that *it was never extended to the Gentile Christians*: of this there shall be given but one proof, it being decisive

to the point. It is in the 2nd chapter of Colossians:—“Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, *or of the Sabbath days.*” Here the Sabbath is considered as *falling with the whole body of the ritual laws of Moses.* And this may show the reason, on which the church avoids the calling of the day of public worship, “the Sabbath.” It is never *so called* in the New Testament: and in the primitive church, the term “*Sabbatising*” carried with it the *reproach* of a leaning to the *abrogated observance of the law.* * * *

Extracts from Duties Towards God, by WILLIAM PALEY, D. D., Subdeacon of Lincoln, Prebendary of St. Paul's, and Rector of Bishop Wearmouth.

CHAP. VII.—*Of the Scripture Account of Sabbatical Institutions.*

In my opinion, the transaction in the wilderness, Exod. xvi. was the first actual institution of the Sabbath. For, if the Sabbath had been instituted at the time of the creation, as the words in Genesis ii. 3, may seem at first sight to import, and observed all along from that time to the departure of the Jews out of Egypt, a period of about two thousand five hundred years, it appears unaccountable that no mention of it, no occasion of even the obscurest allusion to it, should occur, either in the general history of the world before the call of Abraham,

which contains, we admit, only a few memoirs of its early ages, and those extremely abridged; or, which is more to be wondered at, in that of the lives of the three first Jewish patriarchs, which in many parts of the account, is sufficiently circumstantial and domestic. Nor is there in the passage above, from the 16th chapter of Exodus, any intimation that the Sabbath, then appointed to be observed, was only the revival of an ancient institution, which had been forgotten or suspended; nor is any such neglect imputed either to the inhabitants of the old world, or to any part of the family of Noah; nor lastly, is any permission recorded to dispense with the institution during the captivity of the Jews in Egypt, or on any other public emergency. This interpretation is strongly supported by a passage of the prophet Ezekiel, where the Sabbath is plainly spoken of as *given*, and what else can that mean, but as *first instituted* in the wilderness, “Wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness; and *I gave them my statutes*, and showed them my judgments, which, if a man do, he shall even live in them; moreover, also, *I gave them my Sabbaths*, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them.” Ezek. xx. 10, 11, 12. Nehemiah also recounts the *promulgation* of the Sabbath law, amongst the *transactions* in the wilderness. “Thou camest down also upon Mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments, and *makest known unto them thy holy Sabbath.*” Neh. ix. 12. These observations being premised, we approach the question,— Whether the fourth command, by which the Jewish

Sabbath was instituted, extend to us? If the divine command was actually delivered at the creation, it was addressed no doubt to the whole human species; if it was published for the first time in the wilderness, then it was directed to the Jewish people alone. The latter opinion admits, and *prima facie* induces a belief, that the Sabbath ought to be considered as a part of the *peculiar law* of Jewish policy, which belief receives great confirmation from the following arguments:

The Sabbath is described as a sign between *God* and the *people of Israel*:—“Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath, throughout their generations for a perpetual covenant; it is *a sign between me and the children of Israel* for ever.” Exod. xxxi. 16, 17. “Wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness. Moreover I also gave them my Sabbaths to be *a sign between me and them*.” Ezek. xx. 12. [“Thou camest down also from Mount Sinai, and *makest known unto them* (i. e. to the *children of Israel*) thy holy Sabbath.” Neh. ix. 12.] Now it does not seem easy to understand how the Sabbath could be *a sign* between God and the *people of Israel*, unless the observance of it was peculiar to that people, and designed to be so. The distinction of the Sabbath is in its nature as much a positive ceremonial institution, as that of many other seasons which were appointed by the Levitical law to be kept holy, and to be observed by a strict rest; as the first and seventh days of unleavened bread—the feast of Pentecost, the feast of the tabernacles—and in the 23d chapter of Exodus, the Sabbath and these are *recited together*.

If the fourth commandment, *by which the Sab-*

bath was instituted, be binding on Christians, it must bind as to the day, the duties, and the penalty, in none of which it is received. The observation of the Sabbath was *not one of the articles enjoined by the Apostles, in the 15th chapter of the Acts, upon them, “which from among the Gentiles were turned to God.”*

St. Paul evidently appears to have considered the Sabbath as *part of the Jewish ritual, not binding on Christians* as such: “Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days.” Col. ii. 16, 17.

A cessation upon the *first day of the week from labour*, beyond the time of attendance upon public worship, is not intimated in any passage of the New Testament; nor did Christ or his apostles deliver, that we know of, any command to their disciples for a *discontinuance upon that day, of the common offices of their professions.*

*Extracts from “A CRITICAL AND PRACTICAL EXPOSITION OF THE PENTATEUCH,” with Notes, Theological, Philosophical, Critical, and Historical. *Folio.*

EXODUS xx. 8. *Remember the Sabbath day.*

Some think this word *Remember* is prefixed to the fourth commandment to denote either the im-

* This book is characterized by Horne, in his Introduction to the Bible, as having been “compiled from the labours of the best interpreters, ancient and modern.”

portance or antiquity of it. But it rather seems to intimate a difference between it and the other precepts; as the other commandments carry their *own reason* along with them, they are delivered in a peremptory style, but this being of *positive institution*, is introduced with a *Remember*; and that it might take faster hold of the Jews, contains in its bosom the reason of its institution. See Spencer de Leg. Hebr. lib. 1. c. iv. s. 10. However, though this precept be not of *moral obligation*, yet it has the same end as the other precepts of the *first table*; for its primary design was the *Extirpation of Idolatry*,—which suggests the reason why the violation of the Sabbath was punished with so much severity by the law of Moses. *This precept is in a particular manner called a Covenant, because their observing the Sabbath was a badge or sign of that covenant, whereby they engaged to be the worshippers of the true God, and so were distinguished from the idolatrous nations.* “It is a *sign* between *me* and the *children of Israel* for ever.” Exod. xxxi. 17. See also Ezek. xx. 20, which is thought a proof that the *institution of the Sabbath* was owing to Moses, and that the patriarchs were not obliged thereby, nor did practise it. We may observe further, that the law concerning the Sabbath is mentioned apart from the body of their laws, in the fore cited passages, and Nehemiah ix. 13, 14, as being in its nature *different from the rest*; *all the other precepts* being of *moral obligation*; but *this command*, as to the determinate time and manner of performing the general duties here enjoined, being founded on *no obligation antecedent to the Lawgiver's will*;—that a seventh day should be assigned, and a total cessation from labour observed, is plainly of positive *ritual institution*,

obligatory *only* upon the Jews, to whom it made part of their *ceremonial law*, that yoke of bondage which was imposed upon them for the hardness of their hearts; but that Christians are *discharged from the obligation* of this law is plain, from the words of St. Paul, Col. ii. 16, 17, “*Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the SABBATH DAYS: which are a shadow of things to come.*”

What Moses says, Gen. ii. 3, is only by way of anticipation, and has a reference to a law that was not enacted till some ages afterwards. And what makes this the more probable is, that in all the writings of Moses before the commencement of the Hebrew polity, there is not so much as the most distant hint of a Sabbath observed or known. See *Foster's Sermons, vol. iv. serm. ii.* *Barrow, ib.* *Le Clerc in Exod. xvi. 23.* These reasonings prove the Jewish seventh day Sabbath, to be abrogated with the rest of their *ceremonial institutions.*

To keep it holy.] The word *Kadash*, to *hallow* or *keep holy*, does not always signify to separate a thing to religion, as *sanctificare* does in Latin, but is taken in a more extensive sense, for any separation whatever, from a common to a peculiar use, especially when that use is instituted by God.

In it thou shalt not do any work.] Thus we see that the whole of the commandment relates to nothing else but a day of rest (by the Jews) from secular employment and bodily labour, without any explicit declaration, that it was originally consecrated among the Jews, to any other or higher purposes of religion. All that Moses enjoins on that day to the Jews, besides a cessation from secular employment, is the additional sacrifice of two lambs,

over and above the daily sacrifice. Numb. xxviii. 6, 10.

In short, the Sabbath was *celebrated* like other festivals, with *feasting, dancing, and other holiday recreations*, which Philo calls *ταξιδιώματα*, which in time degenerated into licentiousness, and for which St. Augustin censures the Jews.

Extracts from “THE BRITISH CRITIC, QUARTERLY THEOLOGICAL REVIEW, AND ECCLESIASTICAL RECORDER.” No. XIII. January, 1830.

The Jews, who, in this respect at least, may be admitted to be the best interpreters of their own law, uniformly maintained, that the Sabbath, like circumcision, was given *exclusively* to them, as the sign of the covenant which God had made with them; that it belonged, in no sense, to the Gentiles; and that it was not *lawful* even for the proselytes of the gate to observe it. “It is a *sign* between *me and the children of Israel forever*.” Exod. xxxi. 17. “Moreover, also, I gave them my Sabbaths to be a *sign* between *me and them*.” Ezek. xxi. 12. “And hallow my Sabbaths; and they shall be a *sign* between *me and you*.” Ezek. xxi. 20. When that covenant, of which the Sabbath was a *sign*, was abrogated, the *Sabbath itself was of course abrogated with it*. *This is confessed*; but it is said, that the observance of the seventh day Sabbath is transferred, in the Christian church, to the first day of the week. We ask, by what authority? and are much mistaken, if an ex-

amination of all the texts in the New Testament, in which the first day of the week, or Lord's day, is mentioned, does not prove that there is no divine or apostolical precept enjoining its observance, nor any certain evidence from Scripture that it was, in fact, so observed in the time of the apostles.

With respect to the Jewish Sabbath, the conduct of our Lord, who, be it remembered, was born under the law, was *very remarkable*. We learn from many passages in the Gospels, that "it was his custom" to frequent the synagogue on the Sabbath days: but, in all other instances, he appears to have treated the scrupulous observance of the Sabbath with *studied disrespect*. The diseases which he miraculously cured were all chronical; but he encouraged the sick to come to him to be healed on the Sabbath, though they might just as well have waited till the morrow; and if they lay on couches, he commanded them, in every instance, to carry them away. Thus, too, he justified his disciples in gathering the ears of corn on the Sabbath to satisfy their hunger, though their doing so was unquestionably a breach of the Sabbath; and this he did for two very important reasons: first, to show that the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath: and, secondly, that he, the Son of Man, as Lord of the Sabbath, had the same power to abrogate it, as he had at first to command its observance.

It deserves also to be noticed, that though, in his Sermon on the Mount, and on many other occasions, he enforced and enlarged the *other precepts* of the Decalogue, he never enjoined the observation of the Sabbath on his disciples, nor gave them the slightest intimation that he designed the observation of it, under any modifications, to be con-

tinued in his church. Accordingly, we shall search the Scriptures in vain, either for any apostolical precept appointing the first day of the week to be observed in the place of the Jewish Sabbath, or for any unequivocal proof that the first Christians so observed it.

There are only three, or, at most, four places of Scripture in which the first day of the week is mentioned, after our Lord's ascension; and only one of these from which it can be *certainly inferred* that the disciples met on that day for public worship. The two first passages are John xx. 19, and perhaps v. 26, which merely tell us, that, on the first day of the week, the disciples were assembled with closed doors for fear of the Jews. From these texts alone, we could not, with any safety, conclude that the disciples met together for any religious purpose. The next passage is in Acts xx. 7: "Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them." All that St. Luke here tells us plainly is, that on a particular occasion the Christians of Troas met together, on the first day of the week, to celebrate the eucharist and to hear Paul preach. This is the only place in Scripture in which the first day of the week is in any way connected with any act of public worship; and he who would certainly infer from this solitary instance, that the first day of every week was consecrated by the apostles to religious purposes, must be far gone in the art of drawing universal conclusions from particular premises. From 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2, we learn that St. Paul had given orders to the churches of Galatia and Corinth to make collections for the poor on the first day of the week; and in Rev. i. 10, St. John tells us, "I was in the spirit on the Lord's day."

This is *all* the positive information which the Scriptures afford respecting the observance of the first day of the week.

The want of all apostolical precept, either enjoining the observance of the Lord's day in lieu of the Jewish Sabbath, or directing in what manner and for what purposes it ought to be observed, is the more remarkable when we consider that the great importance which the Mosaic law attached to the times and circumstances of divine worship, made it more necessary for the apostles to notice these points, especially in their addresses to their Jewish converts. But neither in the Epistle to the Hebrews, nor in any of the exhortations to the practical duties of Christianity, with which most of his epistles are concluded, has St. Paul once mentioned this subject; neither did the apostles, in their council at Jerusalem, think proper to include the mention of the Lord's day among those things which it was necessary for the Gentiles to observe.

MOSHEIM'S ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.

Vol. I. p. 166.

From this source arose various rites among the Jews, which many Christians, especially those who live in the eastern countries, observe religiously at this very day. We shall take no more than a brief view of those rites and ceremonies, since a particular consideration of them would lead us into endless discussions, and open a field too vast to be comprehended in such a compendious history as we here give of the Christian church. The first Chris-

tians assembled, for the purpose of divine worship, in private houses, in caves, and in vaults where the dead were buried. Their meetings were on the *first day* of the week; and, in some places, they assembled also upon the *seventh*, which was celebrated by the Jews. Many also observed the *fourth* day of the week, on which Christ was betrayed; and the *sixth*, which was the day of his crucifixion. The hour of the day appointed for holding these religious assemblies, varied according to the different times and circumstances of the church; but it was *generally* in the evening, *after sunset*, or in the *morning, before dawn*.

THE END.

Since the foregoing work was written, accounts of the annual celebrations of the landing of the “Pilgrim Fathers” have been published, redolent of panegyric on their virtues.

Descended in a direct line from the old English stock of Puritans, my predilections might naturally be in their favour, if truth sustained me therein. They were among the great actors in the drama of the revolution begun by Henry VIII. in his separation from the Romish See; and though increased civil liberty resulted from the struggle, yet they unhesitatingly trampled on the rights of others, they certainly are not entitled to the character of being the champions of civil and religious liberty.

The true history of the New England Puritans is yet to be written; they did not even belong to that party who were *professedly* most anxious for the promotion of civil liberty; and the severity of their discipline and laws has extended far into the present century.

Bancroft has, in my apprehension, given an extremely partial account of them. He has stated that there were three victims to the delusion on the subject of witchcraft: it appears from the authority of Hutchinson, and Chief Justice Marshall, that there were nineteen; and his palliations of these and other cruelties, seem to me unworthy of a true historian. The account he has given of Roger Williams, and of the benefits of the government of Rhode Island, forms a beautiful contrast to the picture, which even his partiality exhibits, of that of the Pilgrim Fathers of Massachusetts.





